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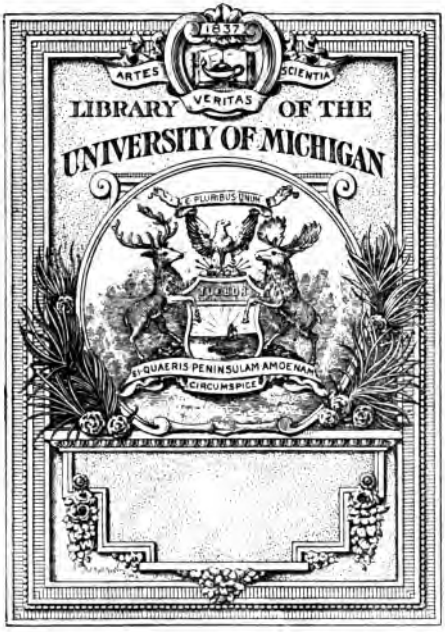
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Political Socialism

A Remonstrance.

Constitution Issues—II.

POLITICAL SOCIALISM

A REMONSTRANCE.

A COLLECTION OF PAPERS BY MEMBERS OF THE BRITISH CONSTITUTION ASSOCIATION, WITH PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESSES BY LORD BALFOUR OF BURLEIGH AND LORD HUGH CECIL.

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PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

To the British Constitution Association at the Whitehall Rooms, February 12, 1908,

By Lord Balfour of Burleigh, K.T.

The watch-words of our Association are personal liberty and personal responsibility. Its object is to increase liberty and to inculcate responsibility, and as we believe that self-help is the mainstay of national character, we desire to maintain the freedom of the individual, which freedom ought to be limited only in so far as is necessary for the enjoyment of equal freedom by others.

We resist the usurpation of power by Government, or the subjection, either of the individual or of the minority, to coercion on the part of the majority of the community. We believe that the only safe path of progress lies in the continued advance of that freedom, and in the ever-increasing emancipation of the individual from interference by the community in the management of his personal affairs.

If I rightly interpret the intention of those who chose as our title the British Constitution Association, it was to take as our motto a phrase which connotes the widest expression of freedom the world has ever seen.

The British Constitution has not stood in the way of change, but it has secured in a marked degree that change shall not take place until after full discussion, that when it does take place it shall be moderate, gradual, carefully considered, and along consistent and practical lines.

The justification of our Association is that at the present time there appears to be a danger that both parties, though one in a greater degree than the other, are losing sight of what has been our chief glory in the past, namely, that without abating our national strength and unity, we have been able to secure that ever-broadening liberty for the individual which we so earnestly desire to preserve. We may be wrong—I could even hope we are—in thinking that the zeal of some for increasing the responsibility of the State, with its inevitable accompaniment of increase of taxation, is endangering those liberties.

In any case, we are within our rights, and are acting in accordance with precedent, if we associate ourselves for the purpose of gaining a hearing for our views. If, as appears probable, we have before us a time when there is a disposition to embark, as we consider recklessly, in socialistic experiments, it is our business so far as we can to organise our opposition on logical and rational principles.

We are sometimes accused of having no positive policy, but surely the maintenance of freedom gained by the individual under our constitution as it now exists, and through a long

series of evolutionary changes, is a positive policy. Neither the importance nor the strength of that cause seem to us to be sufficiently realised, nor are those who support it sufficiently organised, and our object is to prevent the formation and growth of any general opinion that there ought to be no limit to the control which either the State through Parliament, or the community through municipalities, should arrogate to themselves.

We think that the spread of ideas of a socialist type threatens to destroy the moral fibre of our people, and that if these ideas are allowed to grow and develop the result must be the destruction of the ideals alike of self-help and of personal liberty.

We rely for all improvement on well-directed but independent individual effort, and on the encouragement of each individual to raise himself and the family unit to which he belongs, and by so doing to contribute to the general good.

Is it too much to say that the contest which lies before us will be one between Socialism and Liberty? We shall criticise the proposals of Socialism when any definite proposals are made; and if only they are put forward in a sufficiently definite form, it does not seem to me that this will be a difficult task. But we shall also do our best to maintain and support the principle of personal responsibility, which is the corollary of personal liberty.

If we give way to proposals which must result

in relieving grown men, who ought to be capable citizens, to an unlimited extent of their personal responsibilities, national bankruptcy must be the inevitable result. For if, as would be certain, we weaken, or still more if we remove, the check involved in personal responsibility, the result must be levelling down of the efficient to the same place as the inefficient.

At present the feeling of personal responsibility prevents men from consuming on Monday wages which ought to meet their expenses till Saturday. It puts some restriction on the age at which marriage is contracted, and on the rate at which population increases; it induces the majority to make arrangements for their times of sickness, old age, and want of work. Under Socialism all these restrictions would vanish, and how the State could cope with the ever-increasing torrent passes my comprehension. While all men desire liberty, while even the Socialist professes to be anxious to secure it for us, it is really only possible when it is tempered by personal responsibility; and the discharge of personal responsibility is the exercise ground on which competency of character is acquired, and when all is said and done it is on character that progress depends.

But apart from criticism showing the impracticability of Socialism, it should be our business to demonstrate how much in the past and in the present we owe to liberty. That we owe the greatness of our country and the confidence

which men feel in the stability of law and order to our free institutions is a proposition which no constitutional historian will attempt to deny.

In assuming office as your President I endeavoured briefly to express these views in a short letter which set forth the dangers attendant on what I characterised as "Political Socialism," and I venture to add that the essential condition for the progress of the community is that the incentive to efficiency on the part of its individuals shall be of the strongest possible kind, and that this required incentive could, in my humble opinion, only be supplied by a strict application to the principles that "the earnings of each individual shall be securely preserved to him."

The reception given to this letter by various organs of opinion was very instructive. It was obvious that a misapprehension of the aims of the British Constitution Association was very general. By some writers it was identified with Tariff Reform, by some with old-fashioned Toryism, and by others with "anarchy."

We describe as "Political Socialism" all legislation in the interest of one special class, namely, those that are least efficient. Our desire is to advocate the maximum of individual liberty; it is, therefore, totally removed from anarchy, which is that state of affairs in which the freedom of the individual as to his life and his property would be at the mercy of those who desire to interfere with them.

If the British Constitution Association is

attacked as being a defender of monoply, the reply would be that the chief reason for our existence is to attack monopoly. The scheme of the Socialist is to establish a monopoly of the largest scale, and with the strictest order that the world has ever seen. He desires that the "State" should be the one employer. Under his system competition would be eliminated, incentive to progress would be destroyed, and the working man would be reduced to the position of a slave, for if under such a system he disagreed with his employer or was dissatisfied with his wages he could not leave his employment and seek for a more satisfactory position; there would be only one employer and one master, and that employer and that master he must serve or starve. Under the socialist régime liberty, as we understand the term, would cease and be unknown.

In other quarters the British Constitution Association was accused of desiring to stereotype society in its existing form, surely an astounding accusation. The very object of the British Constitution Association is to increase freedom, and to prevent the stereotyping of society in any form. If one may trust to the arguments they put forward, those who describe themselves as socialists think they know what an ideal society would be like, and they wish to make our present civilisation correspond with what they think that ideal society ought to be.

We believe that the ultimate state of society

will be something not within the imagination of anyone now living. If at any period of the past socialists had arisen and moulded society into some form which they considered good, it is obvious that development would have been arrested, and even the amount of progress which we have made would have been rendered impossible. We advocate the maximum of individual liberty in order to render as easy as possible the normal course of social evolution. We do not deny the evils which exist in the present state of society; but we do affirm not only that Socialism is not the remedy for them, but that if ever carried out in practice it would make the position of the average individual many times worse than it is at present.

Socialists seem to forget that society is composed of individuals, and that so long as the characters of individuals are imperfect it will be impossible to have a state of society which is devoid of evils. It is easy enough to see now where difficulties exist, but it is utterly unscientific to think that an ideal state can be devised so long as the characters of those who will have to form it remain imperfect as is now the case. We advocate individual freedom because of its encouragement to the efficient, and because it alone can prevent them from being unduly burdened for the benefit of those less capable. It may be a hard doctrine, but we do say that for the State to follow any other principle must lead to disaster.

Revolutionary economic changes are demanded. But I ask those who suggest them, what right have they to expect a speedy millennium? Let us admit that Socialism is based on a sentiment with which we all sympathise. It is a proof that generous aspiration has grown up during ages in which the characteristic and essential feature of progress has been the growth of liberty. We have no quarrel with the sentiments which underlie some of the theories put forward, but we are entitled to ask our countrymen to pause and reflect before they depart from principles which have served so well in the past, and which not only permit, but involve a continuous improvement, even though that improvement may seem slower and more gradual than many would wish to see.

We have not only to ask ourselves—are the objects just? but we have to consider whether the result would be desirable. We have to ask ourselves as practical men, as men accustomed to the daily business of life—does Socialism present a practical policy?

One of the difficulties experienced by anyone who desires to discuss these problems is the difficulty of ascertaining the real object which those who describe themselves as socialists have before them.

The Social Democratic Federation desire immediate abolition of the monarchy; the repudiation of the National Debt; and a number of other things, with the deliberate advocacy of which it

would probably not be fair to charge all who describe themselves as socialists.

The Independent Labour Party put forward as their main object an industrial commonwealth founded upon the socialisation of land and capital. Land is to be declared and treated as public property. The capital necessary for industrial operations is to be owned and used collectively; all work and wealth are to be equitably distributed over the population. No one is to work more than forty-eight hours during the week, and all capable adult applicants are to have remuneration "at recognised Trade Union rates, with statutory minimum of sixpence per hour."

There are to be State pensions for everyone over fifty years of age; all indirect taxation is to be abolished; and all public burdens are to to transferred to unearned incomes with a view to their ultimate extinction; while money is to be borrowed on the security of the rates on the land values of any districts to carry out these purposes.

The intention to raise new loans with the simultaneous repudiation of the National Debt does not seem a consistent or hopeful ideal, and taken as a whole the policy seems to be a monument of absurdity. We are at the same time recommended to carry out measures which would enormously increase taxation, and we are to limit the hours of labour and so increase wages, but the result would be to reduce production,

which means diminishing the annual income of the whole community. Again, it is suggested at one and the same time that we are to make taxation fall on unearned incomes, while these unearned incomes are to be extinguished. The goose and the golden eggs are to be destroyed together.

We have lately seen the assembled Parliament of Labour carrying a resolution in the following terms:

"That in the opinion of this Conference the time has arrived when the Labour party should have as a definite object the socialisation of the means of production, distribution, and exchange, to be controlled by a democratic State in the interest of the entire community, and the complete emancipation of labour from the domination of capitalism and landlordism, with the establishment of social and economic equality between the sexes."

Is this a step to carrying out the proposals stated by Schäffle, "The State would have a labour system equipped out of collective capital," and again, "The State would collect, warehouse, and transport all products, and finally distribute them to individuals to their registered amount of social labour, and according to a valuation of commodities exactly corresponding to their average cost of production"?

Take again this extract, which will be found on page 103 of "Merrie England," by Mr. Robert Blatchford. "Under ideal socialism there

would be no money at all and no wages. The industry of the country would be organised and managed by the State, as the Post Office now is; goods of all kinds would be produced and distributed for use and not for sale, in such quantities as were needed; hours of labour would be fixed, and every citizen would take what he or she desired from the common stock. Food, clothing, lodging, fuel, transit, amusements, and all other things would be absolutely free, and the only difference between a Prime Minister and a collier would be the difference of rank and occupations."

It is clear, in the first place, that under a socialistic system there is to be no relation between supply and demand. At present what is paid for under our system of free exchange is the service, not the labour expended in rendering that service. Any given service is rewarded with a material object; the service is rendered for the purpose of getting that object, and not for the sake of the labour necessary to produce it.

How, under the proposed system, is the value of any given service, whether it be that of the agriculturist, the chimney sweep, the carpenter, the blacksmith, the postman, or the driver of a motor car, to be valued? The demand for no article, in however common use that article may be, remains constant. Varying quantities of the commonest articles are used by each household from day to day. Under our present system

private enterprise for private gain brings together supply and demand. How under a socialistic system, for example, is London to be fed? How are the overseers of the community to discharge their task? The Post Office, which is used as an analogy, affords no help. All letters and parcels are handed over to the public officials ready for transmission; it would not be so under the socialistic system with the supplies of food which would be required. Or, to take another example: take the articles of clothing. Overseers appointed by the community could not know in advance either how much to produce of any given article, or where, when, or how to distribute it. Take any given area at the present time, and how would the public authority know how many suits of clothes to put into stock for use in that district six months or a year hence? And what about the pattern to be chosen; is individual taste to be consulted or is it not? Or are the whole population, including the female sex, to be put into one cast-iron type of uniform? Are the wife of the Prime Minister and the wife of the collier to be dressed alike?

Again, who is to select and determine careers for the children? At present the parent and the children settle it for themselves, more or less according to the law of supply and demand. In the future is it to be done by agents of the whole community, or is it to be committed to the overseers of each different locality? If the former, will any sane man say it is practicable? If the

latter, how will you secure yourselves against competition between one locality and another? Again, our friends must face the question whether they are going to attempt to put any restriction upon the increase of population or not. If not, human nature will beat them; if they are, they are proposing to set up such a system of slavery as the world has never yet seen.

One of the commonest features of Socialist literature consists in very vehement declarations against the existence of a class of unproductive people whom they describe as "the idle rich." The allegation is that the persons so described do not work themselves, and are supported by the labours of the rest of the community. There is obviously great exaggeration in many of the allusions to this class, but letting that pass, it is permissible to remind those who describe themselves as Socialists that the success of Socialism would itself involve the existence of an unproductive class far larger than that which they profess so much anxiety to abolish. Socialists propose to realise the aims they set before themselves through the agency of the "State" and of Government. The apotheosis of the State would involve the multiplication of officials, inspectors, and every sort of officer to see that everyone would really do what under the Socialist scheme of existence he will be expected to do and ought to do, and these people not being engaged either in production or in distribution of commodities themselves must be a dead-weight

upon the community. It seems fairly obvious that the more functions the State gathers to itself, the more the number of people engaged in Government and Government offices would increase, and the less would be the number of the producing part of the community. With each increase of Government functions, and with each transference of persons from the productive to the unproductive portion of the community, the greater would become the number of those who would have to be supported by the labour of others, and smaller becomes the number of those who would remain to support them.

The Socialists therefore, in their desperate endeavour to get rid of the "unproductive" class of idle rich who, after all, and according to the most extravagant estimate I have ever seen of their numbers, are probably not five per cent. of the population, propose to set up another unproductive class which would go on accumulating like a snowball rolling down a hill, and must reach a very much higher percentage than exists at the present time. Those left as producers would therefore have to work with more hardship and longer hours for the purpose of supporting that large class of the population which under the socialistic system would consist of Government officers, inspectors, and other classes of officials.

Again, Socialists say that poverty is the main evil they wish to eradicate, but the thing is impossible. There exist among the people many

who are excellent in character, in thrift, and in every virtue, but there are some who are bad, who are idle, it may be immoral, and who, at any rate, will not work. Now these must be and ought to be poor. If poverty is to be prevented by the Government—an impossibility, of course, but take it for the moment as a hypothesis—if no one was allowed to become extremely poor, it is quite clear that many people will do no work at all. A large number of persons, including all the worthless of the nation, would not work at all if they were to be relieved from the fear of hunger, and if they did not work, the community as a whole would become so poor that it would be impossible to continue the system of subsidising the poorest and those whose claims are at present acknowledged. There would be nothing to give them. It follows therefore that if poverty were, as suggested, to be abolished, the incentive to work is abolished. The amount of work done would be greatly diminished, and the whole nation would be rapidly reduced to penury. The only alternative would be State compulsion to work. Everybody would have to be compelled by the State to work, and a huge army of officials and persons whose business it would be to see that everybody did work would be still further increased. But, obviously, work under such a system of compulsion would be far less efficient than work where the worker is paid for what he does and has every incentive to work his hardest.

We are therefore confronted with this absurdity. Socialists propose to abolish poverty among the people, and their scheme of doing so would have the inevitable result of bringing poverty upon the whole community. Some Socialist writers say that the present condition of society is really one of commercial war, and that, as all forms of war are bad, it ought to be abolished. It is, of course, wrong to represent our present condition as commercial war at all. It is a misuse of words. But if commercial rivalry is to be described as war, it is a far more humane kind of war than the political warfare which they would set up in its place. So long as human nature is what it is, there must be different interests and conflicting views. These now find expression in commercial rivalry, rivalry in which each person struggles to do his best for himself first, but by and through his own interests for the public interest as well. The competition takes the form either of selling at a cheaper rate or by giving a better article, and the public profits by the rivalry so induced. But who would profit by the political and class rivalry which would be set up in its place?

But refer again for the moment to the terms of the resolution of the Labour Conference at Hull. Is it intended to bring within practical politics as a definite object such a scheme as, for example, nationalisation of land?

In a recent speech, Sir Henry Fowler quoted with approval a cogent criticism by Mr. Glad-

stone of this very proposal: "Are you going to pay for it? If so, it is folly; if not, it is robbery." As many of us know to our cost, the value of agricultural land does not, as an investment, increase in value. In any case, it constantly requires the application of fresh capital to maintain it in condition. I suggest that it would be nothing short of madness on the part of the State to place itself by purchase in the position of an universal landlord. Nor, again, is there any class of speculation more hazardous than the purchase of land on the faith of its being required for building purposes. It is difficult to see how the State could gain by paying even a low market value and taking all the risks. It is true that land has a high value in the centres of population because many people desire to have it, but this is the cause of all rises of value, and the person who is willing to pay the highest price is presumably the person who sees his way to make the best use of it. We are not told how the occupation of favourite sites would be allotted under the socialistic system. Would it be to the highest bidder as at present, or would it be to the persons who have interest with the local authorities? In other words, are favourite sites to be allotted at the discretion of the local political manager? As honest Jack Cade had it, in his Utopia: "It shall of course be treason to drink small beer, and the two-hooped barrel shall have five hoops, &c., but in the last resort they are to wear my

livery and to worship me, their lord and master."

But again, take the supposition that the land is not to be purchased, but is to be annexed, and it will not affect the argument whether the annexation is made by the method of taxing the annual proceeds to extinction by confiscation at the end of existing lives, or by the same process at an earlier date.

It has been calculated that if the entire interest of the National Debt and the whole profit of the railways were to be divided among the population, the result would be to give to every man in the country about a penny a day. A similar calculation of the amount per head to be gained by the community if the land of the country were to be confiscated and divided would show how small even the nominal amount of gain would be, and that although no account is taken of the enormous evils that would result from such a proceeding.

Most of the land of Great Britain is held on titles which are as equitable as that by which any other property is held. Thousands of working men, more especially in the North, have bought their own freehold or leasehold houses. Building Societies are for the most part the investments of working people. Ground rents, with and without the reversion of the freehold, are bought and sold daily in the market, and are largely held by working class Provident and Insurance Societies.

It is too often forgotten that those who own capital are not of one class cut off from the rest of the world and living on the remainder. Such division takes no account of the millions belonging to the small investors in Industrial and Provident Societies, in Friendly Societies and Trade Unions, nor of the £50,000,000 belonging to the million and a half investors in the Savings Banks.

There is absolutely no more justification for confiscation of land than there is for the confiscation of any kind of property. Increments of value have arisen more suddenly and unexpectedly in the case of many other classes of property than in land values.

But let us suppose that this universal confiscation has taken place, how then are desirable sites to be allotted amongst the socialised multitude? Will it be on lines of management similar to those with which we have been familiarised in the case of the Poplar Board of Guardians? The present conditions may not be perfect, but, under any socialistic system, whatever injustice there is would be aggravated by feelings of personal grievance much more bitter than any which exist at the present time.

Municipal trading is thought by many to be in some way or other an advance towards Socialism. It may be made so, and there are no doubt dangers if accounts are not properly kept, and the people are thereby deceived. Inasmuch as town councillors and the like are not always

elected for the special purpose of managing these industries, but for quite other purposes, municipal management and industries may be carried on on sentimental rather than on business lines; but even so, it is not Socialism. The business is carried on by purchasing material in the market from persons who sell it at a profit, by hired labour in the open market, perhaps in some cases at a figure which has some relation to that rate and this is the important point. The capital used in the working has to be raised in most instances by a municipal loan, which is subscribed by members of the capitalist class; very often by rich members of that class, who can afford to take a low interest for their money with what they have regarded as the absolute security of the ratepayers' guarantee, and that for an indefinite time. Now in free and open industry capital cannot be guaranteed for an indefinite time, and in a very large percentage of industrial and commercial undertakings, unless the capital is being constantly increased and replenished, the original capital loses its value.

Does anyone suppose that railway shareholders would not jump at an offer to hand over their property to the Government in exchange for a Government guarantee of a commensurate return? The nationalisation of railways may, or may not, be a good thing for the State, but if it were to be proposed on anything like fair terms, I do not suppose the objection would come from the side of the railway shareholders,

unless, and this condition has not yet, at least, been openly proposed, the nationalisation is to be synonymous with confiscation. Confiscation would transfer property from one set of people to another, but, there would not be enough to go round or to make it worth while.

Our position is that under our system of liberty and free exchange the number of those who need be in poverty is being reduced. Labour is always being attracted to the most profitable field, while the price of commodities is on an average, one year with another, on the decrease. We have no guarantee that this would continue under a system where free exchange is no longer the organised principle. Can the imagination of anyone picture an industrial world which is kept in motion by any other principle than that of exchange for profit? This consideration lies at the very root of the whole controversy. In a small volume on Socialism by Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, recently published as one of the Social Problem Series, the question is fairly stated: "How to make the natural need of the shoeless carpenter the occasion of work for the shoemaker who wants furniture." The Socialists think they can solve this by a socialistic system. We declare that it is already solved by the principles of exchange and the division of labour. We do not deny that there is much to be done; that important improvements may be possible, but we are confident that the difficulty will not be brought nearer to solu-

tion by destroying the system of exchange for mutual profit. Employable labour requires the assistance of capital to establish the mutual exchange between the man who has shoes and wants furniture and the man who has furniture and wants shoes. Capital is secured under our present system of credit, if purchasers can be found for the completed product. The more money that is abstracted in taxes or spent in unprofitable expenditure, the less there is for the purposes of purchase and exchange. The more that can be concentrated on the purchase of articles that require labour for their production, the more near we are to the solution of the problem which Mr. Macdonald propounds.

I have endeavoured to understand the method of solution which Mr. Macdonald desires to suggest. I have read with care the declamatory pages of his book. He seems to me to indulge in much abuse of everyone who acts for the sake of a profit. To me this seems nothing short of madness. A has a pair of boots to sell, and is prepared to sell them for, let us say, 30s. I fail to see anything derogatory in the transaction. B wants the boots more than the 30s. he possesses. C has labour to dispose of; D has some work which he wants done. They agree to exchange, and it is an advantage to all of them. All industry is organised by a series of such transactions. There are difficulties: there is discontent, but let us take care that we do not under-rate the amount of content and happiness

which, under our present system, is distributed throughout the homes of all classes of the population.

If wealth is to be socialised, who will save money? The object now before each one is that he and his children will enjoy the result of his work; but if everything is to be confiscated no one will save, and if no one saves, whence is to come the capital for financing these new enterprises so confidently foreshadowed?

By limiting the hours of work they are going to limit production, which is nothing but diminishing the national wealth, and must raise prices all round. By fixing a minimum wage they propose a policy which must further raise prices, and secure that less will be produced than is now the case. But while everybody would have less to spend, taxation is to be indefinitely increased, and, as a means of ensuring that taxation will fall upon those who have been impoverished, those now stigmatised as the wealthy classes are first to be taxed out of existence.

Without doubt to some, socialistic theories appeal not only as the embodiment of philanthropy but even as a species of religion. A fancy picture is painted of a wonderful country, free from poverty and distress, but no account is taken of free-will or of character. In these pictures it is practically assumed that there are no idlers, no loafers, no fools, no rogues, and no criminals. Some seem, for the purpose of getting over this difficulty, to go so far as to deny

that there is such a thing as free-will or moral responsibility. It is to be feared that so long as men's characters remain imperfect—and you have taken away the one incentive to exertion, namely, the hope of personal profit—such a house of cards would be reduced to absolute ruin.

But passing from an impossible picture of full-blown Socialism, it may be well to consider the more practical question—what are those who describe themselves as Socialists doing at the present time? And but slight consideration will show that in many instances, though perhaps unintentionally, their ideas and propaganda are essentially unpractical. Masquerading under the guise of individual brotherhood, they are preaching in much worse form class hatred, striving to stir up differences between sections of the community, and to sow a discontent that looks for improvement not from self-help but from plunder.

When taken to task for misrepresentation, the reply is sometimes cynically given—it is our business to create discontent. To be discontented is no doubt a step to improvement, but if the discontent is based upon exaggeration, if it inspires not self-help but idleness, if it deceives the worker to think that he is the chief, if not the only, producer of the means of existence, it is a menace to the security of the State and to the progress of the people.

We say that at present some who call them-

selves Socialists busy themselves with a propaganda which is destructive to true patriotism, because it is based upon envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness. But while thus fomenting class jealousy and distrust, there is no evidence that the Socialist himself possesses any clear idea as to how the transition from the present state of society to the fairy-land of communism is to be made. Has any attempt been made to think out what the State ownership of capital would really involve? I say that beyond vague generalisations and fancy pictures, no such attempt has been made.

The request is for the proverbial blank cheque. On page 109 of the volume to which I have already made reference I find this passage:—"Where the line to be drawn between common interest and individual interest cannot be determined by theoretical considerations, but by practical experience of the working of socialistic experiment from time to time." In other words —give us a free hand and we shall tinker your State into something or other after a sufficient number of "socialistic experiments." The programme is one of socialistic experiments, and, while these are being made at the public expense, no attention seems to be paid to what would be the fate of the country. That seems to be outside the Socialist purview; patriotism does not count.

A comparison is made on an earlier page, which might be regarded as facetious if it were

not so inane. "The boy who enters the water to learn to swim goes over the head often, and has several unpleasant experiences before he hits upon the proper stroke or becomes accustomed to the proper medium. So it is when men adopt new methods of activity."

It will, of course, be noted that the country is the boy, and it is expected to go over the head often before a satisfactory solution of many problems will be found.

If we argue against Socialism and show its defects, it is no answer to us to point out the evils that exist at present and under our present social system. We do not deny those evils, on the contrary we deplore them, their existence may make a case for reform, but not for such a revolution as is suggested under the name of Socialism; at least, that is so unless it can be proved that progress is not being made under our social system as it exists, or that there is no hope of further progress and improvement.

Even if it be admitted that under our present system of social organisation a diversity of interests is produced, which results to some extent even in a conflict of classes, we look to the improvement of the present system by means of social reforms founded, if you will, on the more complete carrying out of Christian principles, but without the abrogation of the principles of liberty and responsibility, which are inherent in Christianity.

The Christian ideal is to raise all to the level

of the highest. The result of the socialistic policy would be the reverse; it would inevitably lower all to the level of the least capable. Socialism, according to any scheme of it which has so far existed, stands for the disruption of society as we know it. The principles inherent in Christianity are twofold: what I shall venture to describe as the Christian Poor Law is: "He that will not work neither shall he eat"; but the spirit of Christianity is shown in the other and correlative instruction: "Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ."

While we resist the theory that it is the duty of the State to provide for all the wants of the people, while we hold that it is the duty of free citizens to form their own lives, to achieve success, and to maintain their own share of the burdens of the State, we do also recognise as Christians our duty to those who fall by the way in the journey of life. This does not mean that there is no right of private property. We are not instructed to abolish all social distinctions. There is nothing in Christianity which teaches us to level down those who are above, but rather to raise those who are below. The Christian principle is founded on the law of love, but the Socialist demand springs from envy. In the one case the principle is, "What is mine is thine, and I will share it with you," but the other is, "What is thine is mine, and I will take it by force."

We are very far indeed from saying that the present condition of things is satisfactory. We acknowledge that there is much room for improvement in the present condition of some of those whom we include under the description of the labouring classes. But no honest man who has first-hand and practical knowledge of the circumstances as they exist, will for one moment pretend that he can suggest a sovereign remedy for all the evils which it is easy enough to point out. These evils spring from a great variety of causes, partly economic, partly educational, but not less from causes which are both physical and moral, and many of us will agree very heartily with the statement of the President of the Local Government Board in a recent speech in the House of Commons, when he said that "the time had arrived to cease adding a vast amount of indiscriminate charity, and for concentrating efforts on root remedies and bedrock causes, though, it may be, transient palliatives, leading up to permanent reforms."

But while Socialism is dangerous to the common interest in its positive side, it is no less pernicious in its negative aspect. No one can study the literature of Socialism without seeing that the appeal made, when the padding is removed, is wholly of selfishness. Throughout the cry is not "What can I do for the country?" but "What can the country do for me?" Just as if the State were a kind of Santa Claus who stepped down from above among the peo-

ple, fishing out from his sack gifts such as high wages, ample leisure, and what Mr. Macdonald naively describes as "congenial work."

Once depart from the principles involved in the law of supply and demand, and how is the work to be done by each member of the community to be allotted to him? As a recent writer has put it, "Yellow Springs community, one of those projected by Owen, points its spectral finger of menace and mockery at the doom that destroys the dreams of Each For All enthusiasts in disillusion. The industrious, the skilful, and the strong saw the proceeds of their labour enjoyed by the indolent, the unskilled, and the improvident, and self-love rose against benevolence; a band of musicians insisted that their brassy harmony was as necessary to the common happiness as bread and meat, and declined to enter the harvest field or the workshop; a lecturer upon Natural Science insisted upon talking only while others worked; the mechanics whose day's labour brought two dollars into the common stock insisted that they should in justice work only half as long as the agriculturist whose day's work brought in but one dollar."

To preach to the people the doctrine that the State is some entity apart from them, capable of supplying their every need with a minimum of effort on their part, is well calculated to reduce our country to the degradation of the ancient

Roman state, to whose people "nothing mattered but bread and games."

The question "What can the State do for me?" can only be answered when the question is raised, "What can I do for the State?"

Bluish mid the burning water, full in view Trafalgar lay,
In the dimmest North-east distance, dawned Gibraltar grand and gray,
Here and then did England help me, how can I help England, say?

But Socialism as explained by its advocates is void of any such appeal. The State is to the Socialist a mother on whose lap the idle and the lazy are to fall, pour out their tears, and be pauperised by gifts until their cries are stilled. To serve one's country has been the inspiring motive of those generations in the past who have raised Great Britain to its present position in the world. For that the Socialist would substitute the motto, "Let the country serve me."

The question faces us as practical men, what hope is there that Socialist theories can be reduced to a practical working basis? How is the necessary environment to be created? In Sir William Harcourt's phrase, "We may all be Socialists nowadays," but we have also the caution of the late Bishop of London, "Socialism will not be practicable till men become angels, and then it will not be necessary." How are we going to turn men into angels? How do you hope to get good work out of men for the sake of a mysterious abstraction called the State, who will not work for themselves? Will

men work for the collective benefit who will not work for their own? The question carries its own answer. Does it not stand to reason that if men who strive are to get no more personal advantage than those who do not, it would not only appear but would be, absurd to strive at all?

Personal advantage is really the sole motive power to the immense majority, and so it will remain. To give alike to the efficient and the non-efficient, to the idle and to the industrious, is nothing but the perennial endowment of sloth.

If a man is not to enjoy what he earns, if he is to stand by and see another man who has not earned enjoy equally with himself, why should he not cease to earn also? If it is just that the non-efficient is to be made equal with the efficient, it also is just that he should do as little.

Socialism appeals to those elements in human character that make for inefficiency and for decay. The legitimate aspiration of every man worthy of the name is to improve his circumstances: he does this by putting forth his best efforts. It does not matter whether his form of energy lies in his brains or in his capacity for manual skill. But the fact that he is encouraged to put forth his best efforts is the root of progress for himself and of wealth for the community.

If you disallow him the legitimate fruits of his toil you cut off his ambition, his enterprise, and

his zeal. While, if this is the result to the individual, the result to the community is that the quality of labour is lessened and probably destroyed. Once carry the demands that are made to their logical conclusion, and there will remain no stimulus to industry, no incentive to progress, and no reserve of power.

At the conclusion of the Address the Members passed the following resolution, viz. :—

"That our cordial thanks be given to Lord Balfour of Burleigh for the Presidential Address, in which he has so aptly interpreted the title of the British Constitution Association as connoting the widest expression of freedom the world has ever seen, and in which he has so admirably vindicated our watchwords, personal liberty and personal responsibility. With the Address we agree that the British Constitution has secured to us that ever-broadening liberty for the individual which it is the purpose of our Association to preserve; that we owe the greatness of our country and the stability of law and order to our free institutions; and that in its efforts to maintain the freedom gained under our Constitution the Association has a wise and positive policy."

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

To the British Constitution Association at the Whitehall Rooms on March 4th, 1907.

BY LORD HUGH CECIL.

YOU will see from the Agenda that the first business before us to-day is that I should deliver an address as President of this Association. That is a task which is calculated to stimulate whatever emotions of diffidence I may be capable of, and I am, therefore, glad that it has happened that this meeting has been summoned on an occasion so very encouraging to those who profess the principles held by this Association. Certainly the victory of Saturday last was very conspicuously a victory over political Socialism, and probably no single issue told so heavily in favour of the candidates of Municipal Reform as opposition to Socialism. I notice that those who are displeased with the result of the elections are in doubt only whether they should call it a victory of Tammany or a victory of Ananias and Sapphira. I am not surprised at the last analogy, because in politics whenever you are beaten you do one of two things. If you are slightly beaten you say it is a moral victory; if you are severely beaten you say it is due to the misrepresentations of the other side. But

when you come to Tammany I cannot help feeling that it is overlooked that Tammany draws its support, as I have always been told, from the poorest, least instructed and least responsible part of the electorate of New York, whereas nothing was more remarkable than the fact that it was precisely in those districts which were predominantly middle-class that the victory of Municipal Reform was most conspicuous. The opponents of Tammany are, I believe, jeered at as being the silk-stocking party. No such imputation can possibly be addressed to the Progressives. If there is a silk-stocking party, it is rather the party of Municipal Reform, and I cannot help wondering what the great Liberals of the past, the great Whig statesmen of bygone times—political philosophers like Edmund Burke, for instance, whose writings have done so much for the rational principles of self-government—what they would have thought of an election in which the party calling itself Progressive wholly failed to secure the support of the middle class of this country. For it was more than a mere majority of middle-class voters who voted against the Progressive Party: it was a preponderance absolutely overwhelming in character such as is very seldom seen in English elections, whether Municipal or Parliamentary. And as we are a non-party association it is perhaps not out of place to make some sort of appeal to the more thoughtful Liberals to ask themselves whether they are really lead-

ing their party down a path which can possibly end in anything but ruin if they continue to alienate the great body of middle-class opinion that is against them to-day—that was against them on Saturday last. It is to be observed that nothing can be more grotesque or exaggerated than to speak of the suburban constituencies of London as if they were in the hands of a narrow oligarchy, as if they were the homes only of the nobility and gentry. Of course the main body of voters in those constituencies are very far from being rich men, very far from being persons who have large interests at stake, or who are members of great trading organisations. They are the representatives of a most intelligent, most thrifty and most civic part of our country, and it cannot be too clearly understood that if any political or municipal party definitely parts company with the whole of that class they become emphatically a party non-representative of the whole community, non-representative of anything that can properly be described as the mind of Great Britain.

Now it is necessary to enforce this aspect of the recent election because it leads to another part of the subject I desire to discuss to-day, and because our principles are threatened from dangers on both sides of politics, which we must encounter by an appeal to what is wisest in both political parties. I need not say, for it is obvious, that if it be ominous for the Liberal Party to quarrel with middle-class opinion, it would not

be at all less formidable for the Conservative Party to do so. They would be still more completely destroyed by alienating even a large portion of the middle-class vote in this country. And yet it is impossible not to see that just as on the side of Liberalism the warm-heartedness, the sensitiveness to suffering and distress, the impatience of various forms of evil in our social system which belong to the Liberal temperament —just as those qualities dispose to one side of socialistic propaganda, there are qualities also in their way to be respected in the Conservative temperament which dispose to another side of socialistic propaganda. Conservatives are by nature impatient of the idea of everyone doing what is right in his own eyes and doing what is very often foolish. They are authoritarian. They long to see the world regulated according to the opinion of a wiser monarchy or aristocracy or according to the regulations which an independent and educated class may be able to formulate. Let us, then, be sure of it, if either party, under the influence of these different motives embrace a socialistic programme they will quarrel with the great body of moderate opinion which, happily, is in our country so important and has last Saturday shown so conclusively its power.

We must emphasise these things when we hear talk of a constructive policy of social reform. That is, of course, in itself a very attractive phrase, a phrase which interpreted pro-

perly every person in this room might approve. For it is right to say that no member of this Association is in any respect pledged against wise State action subject to certain limitations and certain principles. We do not take up what Canon Scott Holland called the attitude of "the mere non-possumus of an impenitent individualism." A merely negative attitude is not at all necessary to any member of this Association. But we do insist on certain principles and those principles involve particularly the rejection of political Socialism. I know people will tell you that you may be quite right but you are a bad electioneer if you hold such a view. Let us step for a moment to that lower level, and we shall see that all experience goes to show, on the contrary, that the parties who put forward a highly polemical policy of construction are the parties who lose, and the parties who keep their constructive policies on moderate lines and make the polemical part of their propaganda negative are the parties who gain. Last Saturday is a very conspicuous instance. No one doubts that the party of Municipal Reform succeeded mainly because of the negative part of their propaganda, because of their attack on Progressivism. Take the last general election. The Liberal party succeeded mainly because of the negative side of their propaganda. The same is true of the General Election of 1895, and of the General Election of 1886, and I think the General Elections of 1874 and 1880. The exception may

perhaps be said to be the election of 1892, when the Newcastle programme won a very indecisive victory. Certainly it is an exception which goes to prove the rule, because no general election of modern times has been less satisfactory to the victors than the General Election of 1892. The General Election of 1885, which may be said to have been won on the constructive policy of "three acres and a cow" is perhaps also an exception, but it is not generally regarded as a very satisfactory illustration of the working of our institutions. I doubt indeed whether any except a very recently enfranchised electorate would have accepted that particular constructive policy; and the lesson therefore is that except when you are dealing with people who are not very experienced in political matters, a constructive policy which is highly contentious is not a successful form of electioneering. It may be defensible on other grounds, but it is not good electioneering. In face of the facts it is surprising the contrary should ever be stated.

But by all means let us consider in a fair and conciliatory spirit any proposals for constructive reform which are intended to ameliorate the condition of the people. I don't doubt there are measures of that character to be passed. What I plead for is that they should be such as will commend themselves to the great body of moderate and sober-minded opinion in this country. For example, take the question generally most prominent in these matters of social

reform, the question of Old Age Pensions. You may mean two or three different things by old age pensions. Perhaps you only mean you desire to see old age specially dealt with under the Poor Law. There is old age pauperism, and there is pauperism that arises from vice or is found among those who are idle and able-bodied. No one can dispute the reasonableness of the desire to differentiate these two classes in their treatment under the Poor Law. We might well have a new system of classification, a system which should be more intelligent and more considerate. Poor Law Reform deserves at any rate the very respectful attention of all politicians. Happily we know there is a strong Commission sitting who will undoubtedly give advice of great weight and importance upon that topic. But when you go beyond a readjustment of the Poor Law and come to proposals such as the proposal for universal pensions to all persons over a certain age you do, as it seems to me, certainly pass beyond the limits of sound legislative action. I speak not as one who does not sympathise with the object in view. I think no one who considers the problem of poverty in old age can help sympathising with the sad distress that it is desired to remedy; indeed, I remember when I first, some 15 years ago, became acquainted with the question of Old Age Pensions, I was immensely attracted by the programme, and in my election address of 1895 I put in a sympathetic reference to it. I am, in a sense a

convert on the subject; and I think that the consideration that weighs with me is the impossibility of distinguishing on any rational principle between assisting old age universally and a complete redistribution of property on any principles that the State might think just. Because if you are to give universal pensions you are to give them to persons who do not in the least want them—you are to give to the wealthiest of men who happen to attain to 65 years of age. I know people try to evade that aspect of universal pensions by suggesting a number of devious or difficult processes for obtaining the pension so as to exclude a large number of wealthy persons who would not take the trouble to claim it. But that, let me observe, is wholly inconsistent with the general case put forward for universal pensions, because that is merely a different and inefficient form of the workhouse test. You make the thing disagreeable to obtain with the object of preventing those who don't want relief obtaining it. There is no difference in principle. You are like the schoolmaster in "Midshipman Easy" who said he did not flog his pupils, he only caned them. If on the other hand you don't have recourse to any such test you have to adopt the language used by some Socialists who say, "We don't want charity; we want justice in our claim for Old Age Pensions." But if they want justice what has old age to do with the matter? Old age is a proper object for compassion, but you don't owe any-

thing more as debt to old people than you do to young people. If a debt arises at all—the point of view is so bewilderingly remote from the facts that it is difficult to see how people imagine that a debt arises—but if a debt arises it arises from citizenship; therefore anyone who may want money has a right to claim it just as any creditor has a right to claim his debt as he wants it. Indeed it is manifest that to restrict the payment to the old only is, on the basis of justice, altogether indefensible, because if so restricted what becomes of the claim of those who die before they reach the age of 65? Evidently if there is no question of charity or compassion, but only justice, they suffer a most undeserved loss. If there is inherent in the human race the right to 5s. a week, it is very clear that the people who happen to fall out of the ranks of humanity before 65 are never allowed to enjoy that inherent right. Therefore you are led eventually by a series of steps to a complete redistribution of property. If you give a pension you may limit it in the first instance to a certain age and a certain sum; but if you justify your action on the ground that there is a claim in justice you are inevitably pressed forward a little further. You will have next a somewhat lower age and a somewhat larger sum, and so on by degrees down a staircase to which there is no end unless it be in the complete redistribution of property on whatever principle the State may approve. The moment you have departed

from the doctrine of compassion, the moment you have said "This is not to be a matter of charity," then you are committed to the socialistic theory of the rights of property. But if you base your system of relief upon considerations of compassion, your proper course is to keep to the Poor Law with whatever reforms you may think necessary in its administration. The question of Old Age Pensions is likely to be very prominent. It is a matter of great regret that in its most extreme form it appears to have been adopted by the present Government. It is difficult to understand how a Government which consists of many men of great moderation, and contains many men who are thoroughly well acquainted with political science and political economy, should ever have adopted the principle of universal State pensions in every case. But so it is, indeed, the want of money makes the plan impossible, no one can doubt that we have immediately before us a great contest in respect to what are the fundamental principles on which people are entitled to hold property at all. That contest is one to command all the attention of our Association. We are formed for the purpose of stimulating opinion upon these questions, and, therefore, I would suggest to everyone who is here thoroughly to consider the Old Age Pensions question, and to be prepared to argue it when it comes before Parliament and before the country.

Then there is a very similar proposal which

was much in our minds in connection with the County Council elections. It was not a proposal which commends itself so much to Conservatives. I mean the proposal for enlarging the scope of municipal trading. There again it is part of the duty of this Association to urge that the proper limits of State action are not overstepped. Municipal trading involves first of all the stifling of the natural supply of energy for industrial purposes. The fact that the State or the municipality enters into competition with the ordinary trader drives him out of the sphere in which he thinks he might make his profit. No one will in the end be found foolish enough to go on competing with a body which has public funds to draw on to enable it to conduct its business. Therefore, however indirect public competition may be, ultimately it will have the effect of driving private capital and enterprise out of the industrial field which it has occupied. Yet when the municipality has thus occupied the field we cannot hope that it will fill it completely. Municipal government and a very large part of all public government in this country is done in the spare time of people who have other occupations. You can't expect a large number of councillors on County, Municipal or District Councils, to give the whole time which is at their disposal to the public service. They must have sufficient time to earn their living; and therefore the sphere of municipal action, apart from any other consideration, must be such

as is within the scope of the spare time of the ordinary public-spirited business man. Directly you go beyond that you inevitably fall into the hands of incompetent people or of people who are paid. At first you will fall into the hands of incompetent people—of people, as the saying goes, who have retired from business or from whom business has retired. They will be the persons who will conduct your municipal affairs. I daresay there will be competent people on the councils still, but they won't as a matter of fact do the work, they won't be able to attend all the meetings, and they will lose touch with the trend of the business, and as they lose touch they will also lose interest, and the control of matters will be left to others. That already is happening in no inconsiderable degree. Therefore your municipal trading will be badly done, and yet it will drive out of the field private trade which might be as well done as the ordinary stimulus of self-interest can make it.

There is a further danger. You will create an army of public functionaries to carry on these great businesses. A very large part of the population will come to be in Government and public employ. Even in the sphere which we recognise as properly belonging to the State we must notice that a great increase of public functionaries is an evil, specially an evil in a democratic country. We have already what is really a serious position. Large bodies of public functionaries have votes and use those votes to

improve their position and the condition of their employment. Supposing you were to have a great body of workmen, overseers and subordinates, in the public employ, the vote of the public functionaries would be a decisive element in many elections. The conditions of employment—it actually has been so in London to some extent—would be a matter for electioneering dispute. The workmen would require better wages to be paid them by the Councils, and the terms of employment to be made better in this way and in that, so that you would actually have a State earning a precarious living by paying its own members excessive wages. Now that is an impossible ideal, quite as impossible as earning a precarious living by washing one another's clothes. You may easily get a modern State not at all less really corrupt than the most corrupt communities that have been seen. The State in which every nobleman has a place and persons of influence put their friends into sinecures is not more corrupt than one which has a more widespread system—a system by which larger classes are engaged in public functions and are paid more than a proper rate of remuneration, so inflicting a serious loss on the public exchequer.

And that introduces another objection to municipal trading. It is that it burdens the public finances. We cannot hide from ourselves that the whole of this question of Socialism may be dealt with and perhaps ought to be dealt with first of all as a financial question. \

don't mean to say there are not many other lines of attack which may be used against it, but the most effective is a financial criticism of these schemes of social reform which go beyond what we conceive to be the proper limits of State action. All these schemes involve expenditure, and in order to meet that expenditure there must be taxes. We find this is met by those who have sympathy with these schemes on the one side of politics and on the other, sometimes by a graduated income tax, and sometimes by proposals for broadening the basis of taxation. I don't want to discuss any financial proposals to-day. Be the merit of these proposals what they may from a financial point of view, let us be sure, whatever way you may levy your taxes, in the end the burden falls on the whole community. You may get your money in the first instance by a graduated income tax or by increased customs duties, in the end there will be an increased burden on the whole community. As the taxes fall on them the taxpayers will save less and spend less, there will be less capital, and there will be less purchasing power in the market, so that in the end the taxes press on the whole community. It is quite true that skilled financiers may make the burden less painful by putting on the taxes in a judicious way, just as professors of physical education understand so well how to use their muscles that they can lift weights much larger than can be lifted by persons who have had no instruction in the art. But suppose

anyone followed a course of instruction prescribed by Mr. Sandow in lifting heavy weights; he would make progress, he would learn to lift heavier and heavier weights, but there would come a point, sooner or later, at which no skill in handling would enable him to bear another pound. And as it is with the human body so it is with the political body. However skilfully a financier may do his work, there comes a point when no more can be borne without serious interference with the economic and industrial life of the community; and let us be sure of it, when the pressure comes it weighs heavily upon poor people and upon that class of poor people who, perhaps as much as any other, excite the sympathy of all right-thinking persons; I mean the class who are just beginning to have a prospect of living a more happy, less anxious and more hopeful life than was the lot of their parents. It is precisely on these that the weight tells with the most disastrous effect; it makes just the difference to them. If rates and taxes are heavy it is more hard to get regular employment, cheap houses and the like. The weight is a handicap to them, and it keeps them back perhaps through their lives; it is a drag upon thrifty people, a handicap upon the true progress of the people, a burden upon those who above all deserve to be relieved of every burden that can be lifted off their shoulders.

And, finally, let us not shut our eyes to the danger to national character and to the principles

which we insist upon to-day—the principles of personal liberty and personal responsibility. I have spoken of the danger of corruption. There is also the danger that Socialism may enervate the vigour and self-reliance of the community. The same drag which holds people back brings them to a state which commands pity. By an imprudent use of State authority, by a reckless use of State funds and the consequent taxation, people who might support themselves are driven to claim the support of the State. If they don't sink actually to the status of paupers, at least they seem in a position deserving compassion. Then the same arguments and agitation already used are now made more logically effective by precedent, followed by concessions on the same lines. Thus new burdens are placed upon the community, a new set of people are dragged down to be in their turn new claimants for new schemes of social reform and new expenditure. In this way a most dangerous mechanism is set to work by which social reform is made a burden, and is then extended to relieve the burden it creates. Thus there is a circle of burden, suffering, agitation, expenditure, fresh burden and fresh suffering. That is one of the great dangers we have to fear. And we have to fear the substitution of reliance on the State for reliance on personal effort and work. Evidently a State which promotes such a substitution is in the position of a man who saws off the bough on which he is sitting. The efficiency of the State

itself and of the action it properly undertakes depends in the end on the efficiency and public spirit of the individual; and in a democratic community especially the efficiency and the power of the State depends on the whole body of the voters taking a view of public affairs which is not corrupt, which does not merely think "What can I get out of the State?" and which does not look to the State to stand between ourselves and the ordinary chances of industrial life. The efficiency of the State in every part of our Imperial system does depend on every voter in the country really being public-spirited, looking not to his own individual well-being but to the well-being of the whole community.

The forces we have to face are considerable, but as we look over the long course of history we know that the principles for which we are contending have been threatened before in one way or another and have survived. We know that the principle of liberty has long been the inheritance of the English people, and that it has been defended from some very pressing dangers—successfully defended and handed down to our own time. In former days English liberty was menaced by the doctrine of the divine right of Kings. Now it is menaced by the divine right of the State, yet even the State's warmest admirers attribute to it nothing divine unless it be omnipotence. But we must rely upon the English spirit of the past to prevail now as then. Half-a-century ago, when other nations were

striving to achieve liberty, we could rightly boast that while with a great sum they sought to obtain freedom we were born free. I trust our birthright may never be forfeited and that we shall never lightly cast aside the liberty which our ancestors prized. For I am certain that it is from the discipline of liberty that spring the great qualities of our people and enable us to sway the destiny of 400 millions of human beings and make us the rulers of the greatest Empire of the world. Never let us be deaf to the claims of our imperial responsibility. Certainly we never shall be deaf to them as long as we rely not upon the State but upon our own thrift, energy and virtue.

THE STATE AND SECONDARY EDUCATION.

By Dr. F. Arthur Sibly.

Chairman of the Private Schools Association Incorporated, and Member of Council of British Constitution Association.

A Paper read to the British Constitution Association at the Whitehall Rooms, October 21st, 1907.

In dealing with the subject of Secondary Education one's natural starting point is the report of the Royal Commission of 1894. The nation, for some years preceding the Commission, was anxious to make up its mind whether higher education in England would be benefited by State organisation, and, if so, on what lines, and to what extent. The only effective instrument a nation has for conducting such an inquiry is a Royal Commission. Men and women of pre-eminent ability were appointed to consider the question. They were supplied by the State with all the evidence which it could command: they reviewed all the arguments. The report they issued after an exhaustive inquiry was unanimous and emphatic. The social or political or professional bias which detracts from the value of some such reports did not in this case

exist. Not an element which could confer on the verdict of this final court of appeal either compelling authority or finality was absent and the historian of the future will chronicle with amazement the treatment which the nation has meted out to the decision at which it arrived as a result of this supreme inquest. It is hardly too much to say that we are hurrying as fast as we can in a direction diametrically opposite to that which the Commission advised; we are rushing headlong into dangers against which they warned us repeatedly and emphatically; we are working hard to insure the very results which of all others they wished us to avoid.

When last I had the honour of lecturing to this Association I went at considerable length into the recommendations of the Commission. To-day I can but summarise the quotations—the many and emphatic quotations—which I then made. Again and again did the Commissioners assert that "Education is a thing too intimately concerned with individual preference and private life for it to be desirable to throw the whole of it under Government control." The "control of a Central Department of Government" they declared to be incompatible with the "freedom, variety and elasticy which are and have been the merits which go far to redeem the defects in English education, and which must at all hazards be preserved." The work they assigned to the Local Authority was the work "not of superseding" but of "focussing

voluntary effort." In most districts they thought that the present supply of private, proprietary and endowed schools would be sufficient, and advised that the Local Authority should only start new schools "in the last resort" and "to supply distinct deficiencies." They pointed to the State systems of France and Germany as obvious instances of the evils inseparable from State control, and advised in the most emphatic way that in England the State should modestly supplement but avoid superseding private enterprise. After giving, they tell us, specially careful consideration to the question of fees, they set their face against the idea that it is in the interests of education itself, in the interests of the parent, or in the interests of the State as a whole, that higher education should be given at the public expense. They deny that the parent has a right to demand, and that the State would be wise to give, secondary education below cost price, and, while they point out the best means of putting such education within the reach of all promising children, they do not for a moment countenance the miserable system by which parents are encouraged to shirk their parental responsibilities and to hand over to the State those duties which it has hitherto been the educative privilege of the parent to discharge. Finally they protest against the folly and the injustice of destroying by unfair competition, or crippling by bureaucratic control, those private schools which have, they say, in the past

contributed largely to educational progress, which possess as their "distinctive feature" the very elements in education which the Commissioners deemed most vital and which, at their best, are found "in the van of educational progress," "achieving results which those most jealous of educational efficiency would confess to be excellent."

To-day it is my business to inquire, with the necessary brevity which the occasion imposes, into the extent to which the advice of the Commission is being neglected and into some of the causes of this foolish and amazing neglect.

Spite of the recommendations of the Commission, the Board of Education is avowedly aiming at a system in which all secondary schools shall come under its direct control. Few here present have the least idea how far this movement has already gone and what effective agencies are at work to destroy the independence—or the existence—of schools which still retain their freedom. In the first place, all self-supporting schools, both public and private, are being so undersold by state-aided schools that few of them can continue to exist unless they cease to be self-supporting and barter their liberty for State grants. The Municipal schools which have been recently started provide education at fees which hardly cover a *third* of the cost. Self-supporting schools cannot compete on these terms. Endowed schools and what were once proprietary schools are forced to apply

for grants. Private schools—unable in any case to receive grants—find their pupils falling off and have to close their doors. Every school which surrenders its liberty—either willingly or unwillingly—makes it increasingly difficult for those which remain free to stand their ground. In the second place the Board of Education itself —under what has hitherto been called the "four years course," but must now be called the six years course—makes a grant to secondary schools of so much a year for every pupil whose education follows a course approved by the Board. It says in effect: if you will place yourselves under our control we will give you £5 a year for each of your pupils between the ages of twelve and eighteen. Some schools willingly accept the offer. Other schools are torn between the desire for liberty and the desire for grants, but they soon find that they are hardly free to choose. The severe competition—"fierce competition" Mr. Birrell has called it—which obtains between schools, leaves most of them no option whatever. They *must* accept the grants or watch themselves being slowly ruined. Meanwhile the private school, which cannot under any circumstances receive these grants, is, in many cases, crushed out of existence, be its efficiency what it may.

Even this does not satisfy the advocates of State control. Besides the heads of our great public schools—who see no menace for themselves in this movement—there are some head-

masters of public schools and many principals of private schools who still have the audacity to believe that a practical teacher is better able to control a school than an official doctrinaire. How are these eccentric individuals to be dealt with? The Board has several effective means of dealing with them. It is about to issue a list of efficient schools and to persuade the public that no school is worth consideration which is not found on this list. What will be the result? Schools which are already exposed to fierce competition will meet a new difficulty. They can apply for a position on the list of schools which are recognised as efficient. In this case they must of course satisfy the Board that they are efficient. To do this, they must be willing to submit to any and every regulation which the Board chooses to impose. That is to say that they must come under its direct control. If however they wish to retain independence they cannot be recognised as efficient. How will they then secure pupils? There are a fair number of parents who are sensible enough to say "We have known this school long enough not to trouble ourselves whether an Inspector thinks it efficient or inefficient. Whatever he may *think*, we *know* it to be a place where children develop a healthy physique, intelligent minds, strong amiable character and high moral tone." But if a school is to exist it must not rely exclusively on such sensible parents as these, and doubtless many schools which dare to defy this

new form of compulsion will soon have to choose between liberty and existence.

There are extremists who would go even further than this—who would give the Local Authority, or the Board of Education, power to enter forcibly into every school and, on the report of a single and perhaps biassed official, to actually close a school which could not or would not conform to official requirements.

A more effective scheme than any of these is in contemplation—one against which no school whatever could possibly stand, but this scheme can only be brought into effect by a series of moves, and as it belongs to the future rather than to the present I need not explain its character.

The tide which is setting towards Socialism might surely have flowed harmlessly past a system whose vital breath is freedom, whose health and progress have ever been bound up with individualism. As it is, our educational system is borne helplessly along on a tidal race, and we are within measurable distance of a time when an omnipotent bureaucracy shall have bound it hand and foot with red tape and shall have substituted for the freedom, variety, elasticity, which the Commission said must at all hazards be preserved, the mechanical precision and uniformity so dear to the official mind.

And now, Sir, having shown how far this collectivist movement has gone—how nearly we have approached the ideal Socialistic system in which the community as a whole controls the

working and the community as a whole pays the cost of the working—let me briefly consider the following questions. Who are really at the bottom of this movement; whence do they derive their power; and what reasons do they allege in support of their policy?

At the bottom of this movement are the education officials of this country. Most of us go through life with the belief that we can manage other people's affairs for them far better than they can manage them for themselves. The official mind has always been specially prone to the amiable delusion of which I speak, and our education officials believe honestly and earnestly that our national education will never be satisfactory until it has been reduced to a system under official control. Now the education officials have long been a great—and are fast becoming an irresistible—force. They control Parliament; they control the Local Authorities and their voice is loud in the ears of the public.

We hear much now-a-days of the Government's mandate from the people; there is a kind of pretence that all the measures carried through at Westminster have first been demanded by the people. However true this may be in relation to some questions, it is absurdly untrue in relation to education. No one so much as pretends that the Nation has authorised the changes made in this department during the last few years or that it even understands the character of these changes when they are made. Shortly before

the introduction of the Bill of 1902 the Duke of Devonshire said that in no considerable section of the community could he find any desire for the organisation of secondary education, or even any interest in the subject. The Board of Education originates an idea, a mechanical majority in Parliament authorises it as a matter of course, and the nation acquiesces. The nation does not control the officials; the officials control the nation. Not merely do they control the nation but they control it with such ease that they can over-ride the unanimous opinion of unofficial educationists. Those who understand the Teachers' Register know that last year the Board passed a proposal through the House of Commons by the usual majority—spite of its condemnation by the Consultative Committee, by the Registration Council and by every Association of secondary teachers. But for the existence of the "other place" it would now be law. Foiled there, they have still the easy instrument of administrative change by which, without the sanction of Parliament, great and far reaching alterations in the law can be made.

The Local Authorities, again, are effectively controlled by Education officials. Most of the Members of these Authorities do not profess to understand the subject of education technically, and they trust almost entirely to their official advisers alike for their facts and for the inference to be drawn from these facts. The Authorities them-

selves are moreover directly controlled from Whitehall and cannot venture in any particular to oppose the wishes of the Board. As a matter of fact the Authorities are for the most part willing instruments in the hands of officials who have possessed their mind with the idea that increased public expenditure and increased public—that is to say official—control are the only conceivable means of improving secondary education in our midst.

The ear of the public has been so successfully possessed with the same idea, that anyone who ventures to advocate the policy of the Royal Commission is treated by the public and by the Press as an avowed opponent of educational progress—an ignorant and eccentric obscurantist. Few men it is to be hoped would set up their judgment against that of the Royal Commission—would fail to realise that all the facts and arguments on which their own opinions are based have been passed in review by the Commission, and form but a very small part of the material from which the conclusion of that Commission were drawn. Fewer still would pretend to a warmer interest in educational progress than the members of the Commission or to a more intelligent grasp of educational needs. Yet so effectively has the advice of the Commission been with-held from the public that when some of us venture to advocate the policy it pressed on the nation, any petty official, any third rate journalist can, without making himself look

ridiculous ask us sarcastically whether we really think we are going to stop educational progress? whether indeed it is our desire to deprive the nation of the advantages conferred upon it by its modest expenditure on education?

With two of the reasons by which the socialistic proposals of our educational bureaucracy are commended to the nation I must briefly deal. It is a matter, we are told, of such importance that our schools should be efficient that we must demand from every school guarantees of its efficiency and these can only be exacted by official inspection and regulation. How eminently reasonable the position seems at first! Yet if it is so, why confine this boon to education? It is of great importance that our medical men should discharge their duties efficiently, yet who ventures to propose that every medical man shall periodically submit his diagnoses and his therapeutics to an inspector and shall have his drugs, his instruments, his hours, and the salaries of his assistants decided for him? It is of much importance that we should have good bread, and we rightly demand that the hygienic conditions in a bakery shall be satisfactory, but do we find it needful to send an inspector to criticise the way in which the flour is mixed and the bread made? Certainly not. We know well that the unassisted operation of economic laws will soon weed out the incompetent doctor and the unsatisfactory baker, and that the undoubted loss to the public of this method of extinguishing

them is quite trifling compared with the evils of creating a whole expensive host of officials and of subjecting practical men to the constant vexatious interference of inexperienced "experts." Is there anyone who believes that the public would do well thus to fetter the medical profession, or that the profession itself would submit to it? Is there indeed *any* department of our industrial life beside our educational system which is asked to submit to such control? Of *all* departments that of secondary education stands in least need of it for, in the first place, we have in our system of public examinations an excellent test by which the work of a school can be efficiently and impartially gauged, and in the second place there is no other department in which competition is so keen and the survival of only the fittest so certain, for to the ordinary commercial competition, is added the competition of State-aided and of endowed institutions both of which are able to sell far below cost price,—a condition of things quite unknown in any other department of our social life. I cannot here enter into the relative values of inspection and public examination as tests of efficiency. To pave the way for the inspector public examinations have been absurdly depreciated. Sir Joshua Fitch—an inspector of long experience and an authority on education second to none among us—thus expressed his mature judgment: "In contemplating future action whereby secondary schools may be brought under

public supervision examination is of more importance than inspection. It is more likely to be just and impartial. It is more helpful to the scholars and more serviceable and satisfactory to their parents. It certainly interferes less with the independence, originality and personal enthusiasm of the teachers—educational factors which, under any conceivable system, it is of the utmost importance to encourage." It is interesting to observe, in passing, that, in the face of such an opinion as this, in the face of the Universities which conduct public examinations, and in the face of the many absolutely first rate teachers who prepare for them, the officials of the Board of Education have, by the regulations recently issued, forbidden schools under their control to present any pupils under 15 years of age for public examination. The power to withhold public money thus enables the officials to dictate—in a matter which is at the very least an open one—to a body of men and women who are their equals in educational ability, and their superiors in practical experience. No defect of any serious kind is *inherent* in the system of public examinations. They can easily be made an almost perfect test of the mental training a school gives while they afford stimulus to the pupil and leave a practically unfettered liberty to the teacher. In no department of our social life is there therefore less need than there is in our educational system for inspection and regulation by the State; in no department is there

greater need for that freedom which is the very antithesis of official control. Compulsory inspection doubtless has some advantages, but these are trifling compared with its great and manifold disadvantages. I say then Sir that we have, in competition and public examinations, tests of a school's efficiency which leaves little to be desired. If further control of the individual school is desirable it should be in the hands not of a State department but of the teaching profession.

A second reason given for State interference with secondary education is that the education of the child is so important that some at least of the cost, if not the whole, should be taken from the parent and assumed by the State. The implied assumption that the State has an income independent of its members by which it can relieve them to any extent it sees fit, is an assumption which lies at the root of all the socialistic proposals of to-day. An Irishman once upon a time, it is said, riding home from market with a sack of potatoes, shifted the sack from his horse's shoulders to his own, so as to relieve the horse of the extra weight. Few men are so dense as this benevolent Irishman yet a general belief that the State, which derives its whole income from its subjects, can relieve them by transferring their burden to its own shoulders is assumed daily, not by ignorant dullards only, but by men of all ranks and all grades of intelligence. We are told in all seriousness that it is

not reasonable to expect parents to bear the whole cost of educating their children—the State ought to do its share! It really says little for the intelligence of the public mind that this absurdity should parade daily unrebuked in the Press and on the platform, but since it does so let us for a moment consider the question further.

To the community *as a whole*, the transfer of the cost of education from the private expenditure of individuals to the rates and taxes which these individuals have to pay so far from diminishing the burden, greatly increases it. As long as schools require premises, as long as teachers require salaries, as long as pupils need books and apparatus, these things will obviously have to be paid for. The aggregate cost will depend upon the care with which expenditure is incurred and the scale on which these items are supplied. Now public bodies are notoriously less economical than private individuals and commercial companies. For this there are several reasons. First and foremost comes the love we all feel for having everything of the best. In the case of the individual this desire is kept within reasonable limits by the slenderness of his purse. In the case of public bodies, which have an unlimited purse to dip into, the desire leads to extravagance. Not merely is more money spent, but the extra expenditure is out of all proportion to the extra advantage. Thus, in some rate-aided schools microscopes and balances fit for the use of a scientist and costing from £10

to £15 each are put into the hands of unskilled and careless boys who would be as well off with instruments costing one tenth of this amount. Palatial buildings, elaborite equipment, and extravagant expenditure generally are the certain results of Municipal and State enterprise. In the next place, the duty of supervising this expenditure falls upon officials who are in no way interested in guarding it, and whose own salaries and expenses add very materially to the total cost. And then, also, we have to reckon with those peculiar ideas of honour which make men who are strictly honest in their dealings with individuals quite dishonest in their dealings with the State and public bodies—vide the unblushing frauds on the income tax and the customs, the South African War contracts, and the general tendency to supply inferior materials to public bodies. Finally we open the way for jobbery whereby those whose duty it is to guard the public interests sacrifice them for their own private advantage. Under the accumulated influence of the foregoing causes public expenditure is always extravagant. The cost therefore to the community *as a whole* of a system of education under public control can in no case be less than it is under private management, and is quite sure to be much greater. If we say that the cost would, for the same standard of efficiency, be double, we are probably within the mark.

If, however, the burden remains—if by a system of free education we merely mean a

system which costs twice as much—surely the burden may at least be so distributed as to be lightened for those who most need assistance. To me it appears perfectly clear that however carefully we plan to tax one section of the community for the benefit of another—and however much injustice we may commit in the process—we can in no way prevent the ultimate distribution of the tax over the whole community. The market value of each man's labour is not arbitrarily fixed, but bears a certain proportion to the value of every other man's. That proportion, dependant as it is on unalterable economic laws, cannot be permanently changed by any fiscal arrangement and if, for example, to-morrow, every doctor or every grocer were required to pay an annual license of £100 a year he would speedily distribute this burden over the community generally by an increase in his fees or his prices. His patient or customer would be relieved of a small fraction of the burden of taxation and would be in a position to meet a proportionate increase in fees or prices. Thus briefly stated, my contention may not be admitted by all. Vitally important as this matter is in dealing with the general trend of socialistic proposals it is, however, in no way essential to my own position on the education question for we do not propose merely to tax the upper classes for the education of the lower, but to tax all classes for the education of all classes. We begin by asking A. B. C. the ratepayers and taxpayers of the

lower, the middle and the upper classes to pay for the education of A. Meanwhile B. and C. are assured that the indirect results to them from the education of A. will compensate them many times over for the extra expense. After a time B.—forgetful of these indirect advantages—grows discontented and insists that he ought to get direct advantage from the burden he has borne so long. Simple man as he is, he thinks he will do this without materially adding to his burden. So now we have A. B. and C. paying for A. and B. Finally C. points out how miserably our Universities are equipped compared with those of other lands and produces the well worn argument about our losing our commercial supremacy. He demands twenty millions or so for putting the Universities right, and we end up by C. B. and A. paying for A. B. and C. It might seem that we have just worked back to the point from which we started. As regards the distribution of the burden we have done this but in no other way. A. B. and C. pay much more in rates and taxes than they did in education fees, and the money is no longer spent at the discretion of each individual. Meanwhile the best elements in our system have been destroyed, and our schools controlled by the nation, can be used as instruments by the majority for propagating their social and religious views, and for crushing out of existence any views of which they disapprove.

I have not, Sir, entered to-day into the reasons —many and great—which convinced the Royal Commission that in the interests of education itself a general State control was above all things to be avoided. I have merely tried to show the extent to which the wishes of the Commission are being frustrated, and to examine two of the fallacies by which this disregard of their advice is justified.

In conclusion allow me, Sir, to repeat one thing which I said at my last lecture. There is nothing I believe which we need so much in our political life as the enunciation of certain definite principles which the State is not at liberty to transgress. The whole of our system of law and morals, in so far as it applies to the relations between individual and individual, is based on the assumption that the rightfulness or specific actions must not be determined casuistically, but by a reference to generally accepted principles. If, having shown that the removal of a given man from this terrestrial sphere is obviously desirable in the interests of the community as a whole, I were to remove him out of harm's way I should be promptly hanged for murder. Anarchy alone could ensue from the consideration of each case on its merits. Both in private and public life the only rule of wisdom is to be guided by general principles. To a large extent the same idea is accepted in *International* relations and we have, even now, been laying down afresh laws by which nations

are to be bound. The greatest good of the greatest number is an excellent test to apply to the general *rules* by which we seek to define our moral and our legal duties: it is an utterly unsatisfactory test to apply to individual actions. Unless in our civic life certain limitations are recognised by which the freedom of the individual and the inviolatility of his property are protected from the tyranny of the State our civilisation is doomed to destruction. It is not enough to show that a given law is in the interests of the majority, we must insist that it shall not transgress the general principles which lie at the heels of all law and morality. Slavery is none the less slavery because the State is the task master, tyranny is none the less vile because it is the tyranny of a self-seeking majority instead of a self-seeking oligarchy. Had I time I could show beyond dispute that nothing less can justify the behaviour of the State towards private enterprise in education than the assumption that every man's property and freedom—every man's livelihood and welfare—are at the absolute disposal of the majority, and may be ruthlessly sacrificed to the general welfare.

I cannot more fitly conclude this paper than by quoting the lines in which Tennyson places freedom above all temporal good and insists that no material gain can compensate for its loss:

You ask me why, tho' ill at ease,
  Within this region I subsist
  Whose spirits falter in the mist,
And languish for the purple seas.

It is the land that freemen till,
  That sober-suited freedom chose,
  The land where girt with friends or foes
A man may speak the thing he will.

A land of settled government,
  A land of old and just renown,
  Where freedom slowly broadens down
From precedent to precedent.

Should handed unions persecute,
  Opinions, and induce a time
  When single thought is civil crime,
And individual freedom mute.

Tho' Power should make from land to land
  The land of Britain trebly great—
  Tho' every channel of the State
Should fill and choke with golden sand—

Yet waft me from the harbour-mouth,
  Wild wind! I seek a warmer sky,
  And I will see before I die
The palms and temples of the South.

THE PROBLEM OF UNEMPLOYMENT.

By Rev. P. S. G. Propert, M.A.
Chairman of the Fulham Guardians and Member of Committee of the B.C.A.

A Paper read at the Oxford Constitution Conference, 1907.

The British Constitution Association was established in November, 1905, with the object of promoting and upholding the fundamental principle of personal liberty and responsibility, the principle of the British Constitution, and, as a natural corollary, of limiting the functions of governing bodies accordingly. Since that date the Association has been quietly and unostentatiously laying solid foundations on which it will be possible to erect a sound and enduring superstructure. It is a happy augury of a successful future that a historic centre of education such as Oxford was selected for our first Annual Conference. As a platform from which to introduce our views and principles to the British public we could not have chosen a better.

The particular problem with which I am asked to deal is that of Unemployment—a social difficulty which varies in intensity in accordance with the moral, physical, and economic condi-

tions of the community. As through my audience I am addressing a wider public beyond Oxford, I wish to regard this paper as a general statement of the attitude which the British Constitutional Association assumes to the problem rather than as a technical and scientific exposition intended only for expert sociologists. Through you I speak to the public.

I will begin at once by saying that the problem is in no sense peculiar to our own time or to our own social system, as State Socialists constantly and ignorantly aver. Neither is it so acute as it has been found in earlier periods of history. Unfortunately, it has recently received recognition by both the great political parties in the State, and has, in consequence, assumed a false and exaggerated position. In fact, large masses of the people now regard it as a problem which has been removed from their hands for solution by the State. During the agitation in favour of the Unemployed Workmen Bill, 1905, the remark most frequently heard was that Unemployment was a National question; in other words, it was no concern of the individual, but of Parliament. It is this fallacious appeal to the State which we as an Association deplore, and which we desire to correct; for what is true of the problem of Unemployment is also true of many other social questions—*e.g.*, education and temperance: these have been complicated and retarded by an appeal to politics and by State interference.

If we are attentive observers of modern conditions, we shall see that the social phenomena which at first sight seem peculiar to our own time are, when read in the light of history, only links in an endless chain of difficulty from which civilised communities are never wholly free. As we are meeting in Oxford, I may venture upon a brief reference to classical history. The highly organised civilisations of Greece and Rome were both hampered by Unemployment and both aggravated the evil by State interference.

The burning question in ancient Rome during the Empire was the problem of Unemployment. It occupied the attention of each succeeding Emperor who ascended the Imperial Throne. His first anxiety was to reduce the number of idle dependents. When Julius Cæsar came into power three hundred and twenty thousand Romans shared in public relief. Under his strong and wise rule this number was cut down by half. Under the Antonines the number rose to nearly six hundred thousand.

Cicero's finest utterances were delivered as a warning to the Imperial City to mend her ways in this respect. He predicted that if the State persisted in legislation designed merely to relieve the proletariat and artisan population of Rome, it would bring about not only the demoralisation, but the dissolution of the Empire. I need not remind you that his words proved to be prophetic.

In examining our own history we find the same difficulty. The problem which the Elizabethan statesmen had to face was the problem of Unemployment. The difficulty which confronted politicans in the begining of the seventeenth century and again in 1832 was the same stubborn problem.

The passing of an Act of Parliament merely marks a stage in social progress, and it is by analysing an Act that we are able to diagnose the social conditions of the time. The fatal element in the Unemployment Workmen Act, 1905, is that it introduces the evil which all State interferences with industry produce. It restricts the fluidity of labour by encouraging immobility. It introduces a new form of servitude. The worker who perceives in it a guarantee of employment and maintenance near his own door will, like the pauper of former years, take up a resolute and even defiant attitude of immobility. He will become a dependent and bound to the parish. It is because I desire to protect the independent labourer from a retrogression to this condition of servitude that I ask this Conference to support me in condemnation of this reactionary measure.

At the root of this question, both in the early days to which we have already referred and at the present time, lies the fact that the able-bodied labourer cannot be artificially provided with employment on an economic basis. Can the unemployed man be made to produce something

of economic value to the community without loss to the public funds or without making him a slave?

Those who will take the trouble to study State papers will learn that there have been occasions when the State has attempted this at various periods. When there was little notion of free competition or of economic principles, State and Municipality interfered with wages and with the management of industry. Every one was subject to restrictions in the supposed interest of the nation; but this national organisation of industry did not solve the problem. It only increased the difficulty, as artificial interference with economic laws always must do.

I think I have now said sufficient to show that we cannot look to the State for a solution of this question. To do so is to blunder into national danger. If this be the case, is there any alternative?

Having criticised and condemned the Act, my hearers may very properly demand that I should offer some alternative remedy. In seeking for this, I am convinced we shall fall into error if we detach the *present* from the *past*, or act without regard to the *future*. We have seen that unemployment is a product of all human civilisations, and that it is a hereditary evil. To suppose that we can alter the structure of society by sudden and arbitrary legislative action is greatly to err. Most of our social difficulties come from moral weaknesses in human nature or from physical

defect rather than from imperfections in our social system; therefore violent and sudden revolutions have never succeeded because they leave human nature untouched, and root evils soon reappear.

We as an Association declare that there is no *panacea* for the problem of Unemployment This social disease cannot be treated in the mass. The solution must come through the individual, and not through the State. Indeed, if we would approach this subject aright, we must altogether cast out every trace of personal ambition in the remedial suggestions which we may propose.

But the question of labour is after all a question of markets, and not of politics. It is a question of supply and demand; it is strictly an economic problem. The industrial classes have a commodity to sell, and the open labour market is the best place in which to exchange it. If there is not so brisk a demand for this commodity as the seller could wish, I cannot see that any one in particular is to blame, and it is an economic fallacy to suppose that a demand can be artificially created in excess of what is natural. This is the fallacy on which the Act is based. Work is to be artificially provided, and the community is to be called upon to keep up the price of labour in excess of its true market value. How long this can be continued without bankruptcy will depend entirely on the contents of the public purse; thoughtless as we are, a day of reckoning must come.

But the supporters of the measure reply to this: "We avoid danger by limiting the rate and the area of the Act." This may be true; but, if you once admit the principle of rate aid at all, experience teaches us that it becomes impossible to reject a demand in a popular electoral system when such demand is preceded by organised agitation. Is there, then, a real remedy? The answer is in the affirmative. This lies in the removal of all artificial restrictions upon labour. A completely free labour market would automatically carry labour to that point where it could be most beneficially employed and at the highest remuneration. The efficient workman would, under these conditions, never be out of employment, while the inefficient would also receive his value, and not, as now, remain unemployed because the employer is unable to engage him at an artificial price.

If instead of this the wage-earners of this country intend to rely on the one hand on provided State or communal employment, and on the other on the artificial and restrictive methods of trades unionism and legislation, they will make little, if any, progress towards that economic freedom which they might quickly attain if they had the courage to throw over the spirit of dependence which is fostered by an extension of collectivism.

But we are willing to admit that there are many who are incapable of competing in the open market. For them the race of life runs

too fast, and they are unable to keep pace. In a free and natural condition they inevitably fall out of the ranks. This process is going on automatically and continuously as Society marches forward, quickening its pace with each generation. Never in the history of the world has the competition been keener and the race faster than it is to-day, and not only in our own country, but throughout Europe, which contains the most advanced civilisations in the world, we notice that one of the consequences of strenuous progressive advancement is this: masses of human waste product are continually thrown off, which, if neglected, tend to become unmanageable and destructive of social order. For this we must also find some remedy, or at least suggest some remedial action. According to our principles it will not be found in State interference, but in the co-ordination of charitable agencies and in co-operation with the present Poor-Law Authorities. In order to do this we must clearly define the sphere of action of *legal* and *charitable* relief.

"To be entitled to relief from the poor rate the applicant must be actually destitute of the means of obtaining from his own resources food, raiment, medical assistance, and shelter necessary for his immediate necessities; and, unless he be so destitute, the authorities cannot interfere."

Relief under such circumstances is *legal* and is the only relief which the Guardians are entitled to administer. The poor rate constitutes the

fund for this relief. The amount so distributed is withdrawn from the capital, which must itself furnish employment to the working classes. When the amount so withdrawn becomes excessive, it tends to reduce to a condition of poverty the very persons who must provide it. So long as real destitution exists, so long and no longer must the Guardians demand a sufficient sum from the ratepayers to supply such sustenance as the necessities of the case require; but not in such a way as to make the condition of the pauper more eligible than that of the independent labourer.

The attempt to reduce poverty and unemployment by the wide distribution of public money rather than to relieve *destitution* can only lead to an increase in the volume of poverty, and to many consequent evils. This can be proved without difficulty by reference to history. The recent experiment of the Poplar Board of Guardians in this direction has been an object-lesson to the whole country. I believe the maladministration of the Poor Laws by that Board was due not to a wilful desire to disregard the law, so much as to a mistaken notion that they could raise the unemployed out of poverty by the indiscriminate distribution of public funds. The real cause of failure was ignorance of fundamental principles. This Board foolishly believed that it might become the pioneer of a new era, by the indefinite extension of public relief. It produced a Commission of Enquiry. The errors of Poplar

arose out of confused and hazy notions as to the essential difference between *destitution* and *poverty*.

Beyond the area of *destitution* there is a vast field of *poverty*. This area includes the unemployed, and the lowest part of it touches the pauper line. There is always a danger of the unemployed workman sinking below this line into the ranks of the unhelpable and dependent. Here, then, we have the sphere of organised charity—to help the helpable.

In every large town there are large numbers of philanthropic and charitable workers—I need not classify them—also multifarious organisations, including churches, chapels, and an endless number of clubs, thrift societies, etc. In fact, a printed list of voluntary charities, with a brief description of each, forms a ponderous volume, known as the "Charities Digest." As we realise the confusion of these independent, overlapping agencies, many working in the dark, and many at cross purposes with each other, what is the obvious thought which rises in the mind? Surely it is this: the need of co-ordination. In every locality charitable agencies should be so organised as not to interfere with their individual freedom of action, but in such a way that each should know what each is doing, and so enable the work of each to be wisely directed. This brings me to my last and most important point. The desirability of the estab-

lishment of central registries or Boards of Charity.

As I desire to be practical rather than theoretical, I shall now take two examples of such registries—one from an American city with a population of upwards of half a million, and one from the populous borough of Fulham, with a population of 160,000.

The American city to which I refer is Boston, said to be one of the most enlightened cities of that continent. Here, prior to 1870, so far as charitable aid is concerned, there appeared to be no co-ordination of effort: the various agencies seemed to be independent units and governed by no general principle. There was a great deal of public and private beneficence, but the knowledge which could convert zeal and generosity into efficiency was lacking. There, as with us to-day, the idea was prevalent that the extension of material aid was the only method of relieving distress. Again, as with us, a few individuals saw clearly that the bringing together in association all social and charitable agencies, so as to make it possible for these to work in correlation to one another and not at cross purposes, was the first step towards real progress.

In 1874 a widespread and acute wave of distress, the result of a commercial crisis, formed both the stimulus and the opportunity for a new effort, and for the propaganda of a new faith in charity. The public began to move, and loud expressions that something "should be done"

were heard on every side; then it was that those who knew what was wanted, and saw clearly how to organise it, had their opportunity. They were wise enough to avoid legal methods, and no legislation was called for, but, after a considerable process of education, in 1873 the organisation known as the Associated Charities of Boston was established. Almost at the same time similar and kindred organisations came into being in many of the American cities.

In the years 1904 and 1905 we had a similar opportunity in this country, when the question of unemployment came forward so prominently, the public urgently demanding that "something should be done." During the agitation I did my best to direct that demand into a sound and proper channel, viz., organised voluntary effort, co-operating with legal relief; but on the eve of a General Election the temptation to make it a political question was too strong, and it degenerated into an agitation for legislation, culminating in an Act of Parliament known as the Unemployed Workmen Act—an Act which is now admitted by those who administer it to be largely inoperative, and which has obscured the real remedy by raising hopes in the minds of the industrial classes which can never be realised.

In Fulham, with a population of 160,000, chiefly belonging to the industrial classes, a central registry has been established, although we have not yet set up an Associated Board of Charities thoroughly representative of all the

agencies in the borough. The Charity Organisation Society is at present the nearest approach to this, and, if the public would try to understand the ideals of this Society better, they would find in it the nucleus of such a Board already in existence in nearly every important centre of social effort.

The idea of a Registry is by no means a new one. It was presented to Boards of Guardians by the Local Government Board so long ago as 1869, in a famous Circular sent out by Mr. Goschen. It is too long to quote here, but I recommend it to your consideration. The Central Registry was not established in Fulham without considerable trouble, and it required an educational movement lasting over a period of two or three years.

I will now describe in brief outline the four important steps which we took, and which might well be followed elsewhere.

The first was to call together a conference of officially nominated representatives of all the various charitable, religious, and social agencies working in the borough. At this meeting it was resolved that "a representative Council of the various charitable bodies and other agencies amongst the poor in Fulham be formed for the purpose of co-ordinating charitable effort in the borough and educating the workers amongst the poor." From this Council an Executive Committee was elected representative of the borough: it included the Mayor and representatives from

the statutory authorities and voluntary agencies.

Our second step was to approach the Local Government Board, drawing their attention to their own Circular of 1869 and inquiring from them if, in the event of a Central Registry being formed and located at the offices of the Guardians, they would sanction the appointment and salary of an additional official, if such were required. Having received a reply in the affirmative, the third step was to approach the Board of Guardians, drawing their attention to the fact that the Local Government Board approved of the proposal, and asking if they would co-operate. The Guardians replied, stating that they were willing to co-operate in the scheme, and would at once establish the Registry, if a majority of the charitable agencies also consented to act.

The final step was to secure written agreements from the charitable bodies and agents, which, I am happy to state, was accomplished without difficulty, and the Registry was established. It came into operation at the beginning of this year.

It is too early to draw definite conclusions as to the effect of the Registry upon unemployment, poverty, and pauperism, and I do not claim that our very satisfactory position in Fulham is due to the Register, but I am convinced it is a factor which will be of increasing value in proportion as it is made use of by the charitable agencies and Poor Law Authorities.

Our favourable economic position is due to the fact that the Board of Guardians recognises very fully the fundamental principle already referred to—that legal relief should be strictly limited in its operation to the classes for whom it is intended. Hence in our area charity is highly organised, and much of the poverty which would otherwise be illegally relieved by the Guardians is not provided for by voluntary effort.

I am convinced that the same results could be generally obtained if the same methods were followed. If throughout the country the Poor Laws were legally administered and kept within their proper area, while, on the other hand, charitable aid was co-ordinated and brought into proper relation with it, we should hear little of the problem of Unemployment. A free and open labour market, a better organisation of industry, a scientific co-operation between all forms of voluntary aid—herein lies the solution of the problem, and not in State interference through legislation. To bring this to success, a process of education is necessary. In this important work the British Constitution Association has its place, and I commend it with all my heart to those who love their country and desire to promote the true welfare of their fellow-man.

INDIVIDUALISM AND COLLECTIVISM.

1. *Introduction, including a quotation from Herbert Spencer's "First Principles," and remarks by Sir Arthur Clay, Bt.*

THE four lectures by Dr. C. W. Saleeby, on "Individualism and Collectivism,"* were an attempt to expound the principle that the State is only secure in so far as it conserves the liberty and responsibility of the individual. The lectures were delivered during the General Election of 1906 for the British Constitution Association, whose object is to conserve the fundamental principle of the British Constitution—personal liberty and responsibility—and limit the functions of governing bodies accordingly. The Association contends that the following quotation from Herbert Spencer's *First Principles* proves clearly that the path of progress is from freedom to greater freedom, and that collectivist measures for curbing the individual in the supposed interest of the many are as retrogressive as they are unscientific and non-political:—

"Our political practice, and our political theory, alike utterly reject those regal preroga-

* Constitution Issues, No. 1.

tives which once passed unquestioned——. Though our forms of speech and our State-documents still assert the subjection of the citizens to the ruler, our actual beliefs and our daily proceedings implicitly assert the contrary. . . ——Nor has the rejection of primitive political beliefs resulted only in transferring the authority of an autocrat to a representative body. . .

How entirely we have established the personal liberties of the subject against the invasions of State-power, would be quickly demonstrated, were it proposed by Act of Parliament forcibly to take possession of the nation, or of any class, and turn its services to public ends; as the services of the people were turned by primitive rulers. And should any statesman suggest a redistribution of property such as was sometimes made in ancient democratic communities, he would be met by a thousand-tongued denial of imperial power over individual possessions. Not only in our day have these fundamental claims of the citizen been thus made good against the State but sundry minor claims likewise.

Ages ago, laws regulating dress and mode of living fell into disuse; and any attempt to revive them would prove the current opinion to be, that such matters lie beyond the sphere of legal control. For some centuries we have been asserting in practice, and have now established in theory, the right of every man to choose his own religious beliefs, instead of receiving such

beliefs on State-authority. Within the last few generations we have inaugurated complete liberty of speech in spite of legislative attempts to suppress or limit it. And still more recently we have claimed and finally obtained, under a few exceptional restrictions, freedom to trade with whomsoever we please. Thus our political beliefs are widely different from ancient ones, not only as to the proper depository of power to be exercised over a nation, but also as to the extent of that power.

"Not even here has the change ended. Besides the average opinions which we have just described as current among ourselves, there exists a less widely-diffused opinion going still further in the same direction. There are to be found men who contend that the sphere of government should be narrowed even more than it is in England.——They hold that the freedom of the individual, limited only by the like freedom of other individuals, is sacred; and that the legislature cannot equitably put further restrictions upon it, either by forbidding any actions which the law of equal freedom permits, or taking away any property save that required to pay the cost of enforcing this law itself."

Sir Arthur Clay, Bt., in proposing a vote of thanks to Dr. Saleeby at the conclusion of the fourth lecture, said:—"I am performing a duty which is also a real pleasure. No one can have heard these four lectures, the last of which we have just listened to, without feeling how admir-

ably they are adapted both to encourage those who feel the necessity for resolute resistance to the wave of sentimental philanthropy from which our country is suffering, and also to provide them with solid arguments in support of their opposition, 'built,' as the lecturer has said, 'upon the solid ground of nature.' I am not without a strong hope that in respect of social questions sounder and safer action may be looked for from the present than from the last Government. In possession of an enormous majority, they have all unrivalled opportunity for dealing with these great questions in a wise and statesmanlike way, for the real and permanent benefit of the country. We must recognise that the force now at their disposal is tremendous either for good or evil. It is therefore of the utmost importance that all possible light should be thrown on these questions, for it is upon their treatment that the fate of our Nation and our Empire will largely depend. These lectures, therefore, with their clear logic and their brilliant exposition of those fundamental laws of our being which underlie all social questions—laws which are inexorable, and which must be obeyed if humanity is to progress and not regress—could not have appeared at a more opportune moment. Questions such as those dealt with in these lectures are indeed, under present conditions of imperfect sociological knowledge incapable of authoritative proof; for the tribunal which pronounces judgment upon the argu-

ments advanced on either side is the mind of every individual to whom they are addressed, and it is effected by the infinite variety of inherited tendencies, of training, and of environment by which his character has been moulded. It is hopeless, therefore, to look for anything approaching a unanimous verdict. All that can be done is to marshal the facts and the experience taught by the past, and to indicate clearly the inferences that may fairly be derived from them. This invaluable service has been very efficiently performed by Dr. Saleeby in these four lectures. In the process he has brought forward, in a form available for use, a class of arguments which have been somewhat neglected by the advocates of individual as opposed to State development: I mean those derived from biological knowledge. These all point in the same direction, and powerfully reinforce the arguments made use of by enlightened charity, which appeal to the necessity of the development of the higher individual qualities if humanity is to continue to rise. There has been of late years a strong iconoclastic tendency amongst a certain class of social enthusiasts, and the great figure of Herbert Spencer has been one of those who have suffered much at their hands. We must all feel grateful to our lecturer for his vigorous reassertions of the value and truth of Herbert Spencer's teaching, and we must all feel that we have arrived at a point in social questions at which the road divides, and that one of its

branches is the 'pathway to the stars,' whilst the other leads, as we believe, to social disintegration, and a slow but sure reversion to lower stages of human condition than that to which we have attained with so much effort and through such bitter experience. The British Constitution Association stands at the parting of the ways and urges our citizens to choose the nobler path. We must all wish it success in the effort, and do all that in us lies to aid it."

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2. *Remarks by Sir William Chance, Bt.; the Hon. Percy Wyndham; Mr. Mark H. Judge; Sir H. Vansittart-Neale, K.C.B.; and Mr. C. F. Ryder.*

Sir William Chance, Bt., presided on the occasion of the lecture on the Child and the State, and in his opening remarks said:—"The British Constitution Association has entered upon a most useful work in undertaking to make better known the principles of personal liberty and responsibility, and their application to the various phases of political and social life; and I feel it an honour to have been asked to preside at the opening lecture of the course to be delivered by Dr. Saleeby, whose lecture to-day is on 'The Child and the State.' The child, of course, stands in an entirely different category from the adult. The latter, if in full possession of his faculties, can well be left to take care of him-

self, and he should not be interfered with, unless he acts in such a way as to be a danger to the rest of the community. No one would venture to say that any child can be allowed the same range of action. On the contrary, it is absolutely necessary for its own good, as well as for that of the commonwealth, that the child should be properly educated and trained, so that it may know how to exercise its freedom in a proper manner when it is of the age to fend for itself. Where the parents are in a position to give this education and training, the State is not called upon to interfere. But in many cases the parents are not in such a position; in other cases they abuse or misuse their parental authority; and oftentimes the child has no natural protector. But even in such cases the State should interfere as little as possible, so as not to discourage voluntary effort for providing the necessary protection. If the child is an orphan, there may be relatives or friends of its parents willing to take charge of it and train it to be a good citizen, or voluntary charity may be able to provide for its needs; and all these courses of assistance should be invoked before the State takes up the case. Again, if a child be badly treated, there are many agencies ready to provide it with the necessary protection. It is, in fact, only in the last resource that the State should be called upon to interfere. And when it does interfere, its interference must be such as not in any way to endanger the great principle of parental responsibility.

We hear a great deal to-day about providing free meals for the children of the poor. There are even some who would carry this weakening of parental responsibility still further, and who propose that the State should secure for itself complete control over the children of the poor. These persons forget that there is such a thing as the family tie, which it is well worth every effort to preserve—that the family is the unit of the nation, and should not be interfered with by the State."

The Hon. Percy Wyndham, who presided when the lecture on the Parent and the State was delivered, said:—"There is, I believe, scattered throughout the country, and pervading all classes of the community, a growing feeling that there has of late years been far too much interference with the liberty of the individual, and I trust it is not too much to hope that this Association may to some extent focus this feeling, and give it direction and force. It was a saying of Lord Beaconsfield's that Englishmen were governed more by custom than by law, but that could not be said with truth in these days. It is a mistake to suppose that in the matter of well-intentioned but mischievous legislation the legislators of bygone years were wiser than those of our own day. On the contrary, the statute-book of former years was loaded with foolish laws restricting the liberty of the individual, and the further we go back the more foolish and numerous they are. Why then could Lord Beacons-

field say with truth that Englishmen were governed more by custom than by law? It was because the machinery to put the foolish laws in force was wanting then. Now we have armies of police, and inspectors appointed for every conceivable purpose; the municipal and urban bodies with their by-laws and regulations; the county councils with their drastic centralisation. There was much more real local government in former days than there is now, and customs here and there modified the harshness of the law. In nothing have the county councils been more drastic than in the administration of the Education Act, and this brings me to the consideration of the subject of the lecture, 'The Parent and the State.' Either directly or indirectly from the effects of their actions, the State through the local education authorities has deprived the parents of all choice and control in the matter of the education of their children. The secondary schools directed by private enterprise might often not have reached a very high standard; on the other hand, there are or were others of peculiar and remarkable efficiency. At least they offered variety of choice to parents who might have their own views as to why one school might suit their boy better than another. As Dr. Saleeby said in his last lecture, individual boys vary, and their variation is a matter of great importance. Now, if the system of State control is not checked, there will soon be one uniform standard of school throughout the king-

dom. I know of one town in the West of England where the five or six secondary schools in private hands are about to close. Secondary schools in private hands are threatened with the same fate throughout the kingdom. In viewing the relation of the parent and the State, I regard with apprehension the proposal to feed the children at public expense as tending to weaken the sense of duty on the parent's part. Children get the midday meal in the schools in Germany, but at the parent's cost. If discrimination could be exercised, and those only fed at public expense whose parents are in a state of great poverty, the proposal would more commend itself to my judgment; but I fear that great mischief and injury will be done not only to this but succeeding generations, in lowering a just sense of responsibilityon the part of the parents."

Mr. Mark H. Judge occupied the chair at the lecture on the Family and the State, and in his opening remarks said:—"The measure of support given to the British Constitution Association, prior to the dissolution of the late Parliament, proved that there was a considerable section of the community then alive to the need for some organisation through which believers in personal liberty might resist encroachments on this fundamental principle of the British Constitution. If such an organisation was necessary during the life of the late Parliament, surely it is doubly so under the Parliament whose election is now proceeding. Among many significant

features of the new House of Commons, not the least remarkable is the return of so many members who describe themselves as belonging to the Labour Party. This is practically a new party in British politics, and its true character has yet to be seen, but that out of it will come a collectivist party may be expected; and, it being desirable that every considerable section of the community should be represented in the House of Commons, individualists have nothing to regret in the return of these Labour members, and in so far as these members are advocates of collectivist measures for encroaching on the liberty and responsibility of the individual, they are likely to make less headway by direct advocacy in the House of Commons than by bargainings behind the scenes. A Labour Party, as such, is as much a misnomer as would be a middle-class party. Workmen are no more peas in a political pod than middle-class men are. Thirty-six years ago I was an active member of the committee which promoted the candidature of George Odger in Southwark. That committee included such individualists as John Stuart Mill and Professor Henry Fawcett. The candidature of George Odger had no tinge of collectivism about it, and the Labour Party have a great disappointment in store if they imagine that all the British workmen who become members of Parliament will follow the collectivist lead. If the advent of the Labour Party indicates a growth of collectivist opinions, it at the

same time brings out into bold relief the fact that the two great political parties are still in the main true to the fundamental principle of our constitution. The strength of the individualist cause is too seldom realised even by individualists themselves. The great bulk of the community are not politicians, and only wish to be left alone. They are a reserve force for individualism which will have to be reckoned with whenever extreme collectivist measures come seriously before Parliament. Let me give you in figures some facts in connection with a recent municipal election. Two candidates between them mustered 480 votes. No less than 1,960 voters refrained from going to the poll, and the collectivist and non-political candidate was returned by merely 16 per cent. of the electorate. But this does not tell the full story of the little force there was behind the successful candidate. The population of the constituency exceeds 12,000, and thus we have the representative of 378 persons presuming to regulate the homes and lives of no fewer than 12,000 souls. This municipal tyranny is only tolerated because it fails to carry out its policy as a whole. Our liberty is encroached upon piecemeal, and by proceedings which are kept from the public view. It will be the work of the British Constitution Association to bring the light of public opinion to bear upon all measures which interfere or attempt to interfere with the liberty of the individual citizen, by whatever party, and nothing can be more

helpful to a right understanding of the principle at stake than the lectures now being given by Dr. Saleeby."

Sir Henry Vansittart-Neale, K.C.B., presided at the fourth lecture, and said:—"I am sure there is much force in the old saying, 'if you want a thing well done, do it yourself.' Now many of our people expect the State to do almost everything for them. Many years ago, Denison, the East End worker, seems to have been impressed by this tendency. He expresses the wish (I speak from memory) 'that he could get people to understand that the state is not a mysterious stranger round the corner with unlimited means in his purse, but Brown, Jones, and Robinson themselves.' The contrary idea seems to gain ground, that because a man does a certain amount of work, the State owes him a debt, and should not only look after the education of his children, but find him work, and also support him in old age. This view has, I fear, been fostered by our Poor Law, which has lowered wages, discouraged thrift, and led children to neglect the duty of supporting parents in old age. Many are asking for: (1) work to be provided for all unemployed, as a right, not as at present as a relief; (2) dwellings to be erected by the ratepayer, and let at rents which will not give a return on the capital; (3) old-age pensions. The demoralisation which would result from granting these things would be most serious, and I trust that this Association will

prove itself a bulwark against any such schemes. In other directions we find the State interfering, as witness the restrictions on employment of labour, and those on building. Some of these restrictions may be necessary, and all are perhaps well-intentioned, but it is a question whether they do more harm than good. The middle-aged workmen whose hair is grey cannot obtain employment because of the Employers' Liability Act, unless he can dye his hair. The building by-laws of the urban and district councils so increase the cost of erection of houses that new cottages are not built, and you will remember that Mr. Justice Grantham was tried as a criminal because he attempted to meet the wants of the day by building less expensive cottages than the district council would pass. I have myself experience of the objectionable side of the councils and their officers. We are no doubt better off than Russia, where the administration of the commune seems to be most unsatisfactory and tyrannical, and to be a chief cause of the dissatisfaction of the peasants; but the tendency of the day is too much towards interference with the liberty of the citizen by councils or other corporate bodies, and the British Constitution Association will be doing a most useful public work in carefully watching the proceedings of these bodies."

Sir Arthur Clay, Bt., on the conclusion of the fourth lecture, proposed the following resolution:—"That the members of the British

Constitution Association hereby place on record their high appreciation of the first course of lectures by Dr. C. W. Saleeby on 'Individualism and Collectivism,' in which he has so well expounded the principle that the State is only secure in so far as it conserves the liberty and responsibility of the individual." This was seconded by Mr. C. F. Ryder (Chairman of Council), supported by Sir William Chance, Bt., and carried by acclamation.

Mr. C. F. Ryder, in seconding the resolution, said:—"The gulf which separates the Liberal Party of the present day from its predecessors in title of sixty years ago, with their intense individualism and dislike of State interference, is so vast and impassable that it is not at first apparent why modern demagogues should cling to the name. A moment's consideration, however, will show us that in party politics, the greater the difference in substance and principle, the more necessary is it to preserve the form, and at this General Election many thousands of votes have doubtless been cast for the Liberal party by electors who have neither the time nor the inclination to examine its programme, but whose action is almost wholly governed by the glamour of past achievements, by the memory of the days when Liberalism stood for self-reliance and independence, and a Liberal could truly say with Byron—

'I would all men were free—
As well from kings as mobs, from you as me.'

It was, in my opinion, unfortunate for the well-being of this country that the Liberal party, properly so-called, did not formally dissolve itself in the early seventies. It had done its great work of striking the shackles from industry and labour, of opening the channels of trade, of reducing class privileges to harmless and ornamental dimensions, of abolishing religious disabilities, and of giving to every man, as far as can be given without interference with the equal rights of other men, the opportunity for self-advancement. But this is ancient history. What we have to recognise is that the time has come when both political parties—Conservative as well as Liberal—will have to declare themselves. The British Constitution Association affords a platform on which the individualists of both the great political parties may stand, and I trust that the Association will be so supported that it may become a strong barrier to attempts to curtail still further the liberty and responsibility of the individual. The lectures which Dr. Saleeby has given most clearly set out the great principle the Association stands for, and, when published, cannot but have a great influence on all thoughtful men."

THE MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS— AND AFTER.

A Letter from the Chairman of Committee and Honorary Secretary of the B.C.A., reprinted from *The Times*.

To the Editor of "The Times."

SIR,—All who value freedom as the greatest asset of the commonwealth must rejoice over the result of the Municipal poll throughout the country being to confirm the view of the "Edinburgh" reviewer who, writing on "Socialism in the House of Commons," says of the number of Labour Socialists returned at the General Election that it "must be looked upon not as a portent but as an accident."

There is, however, not sufficient cause to look upon the position with complacency. Though the victory is encouraging it is only half the battle, for it must be noted that many of the Municipal Reformers on one vital question only pledged themselves "to oppose any undue extension of Municipal trading."

Something more than opposition to any extension of Municipal trading is required if our Municipalities are to conform to the fundamental principle of the British Constitution—personal liberty and responsibility. Borough Councils that are loyal to this principle will refrain from

undertaking works of any kind which can be done by private enterprise. But despite the weakness of the programme, it is very important to remember the pregnant fact that it was the public feeling against Socialism which secured the defeat of the Non-political Progressives, who are as much opposed to true Liberalism as they are to true Conservatism.

In the chorus of rejoicing there is need for one clear note which shall serve as a keynote to future action. Having cleared to some extent the Boroughs, our efforts should be devoted to securing candidates with a more definite reform policy in order that in March next County Councillors may be elected who will be prepared to reverse the policy which has given us *inter alia* the Thames fleet of steamers and the hugely overgrown Works Department. The success already achieved should be sufficient encouragement for the greater effort necessary to reform the London County Council.

How necessary it is to watch every department of public life is illustrated by the opening of a Free Billiard Room by the Borough Council of Battersea, and by the astounding information appearing in the Press that 92 men (first stated to be 390) were brought up from labour colonies to vote for Borough Council Candidates, their fare being paid out of the funds of the Central (Unemployed) Body. It has been truly said "the vicious character of a system under which such audacities are possible is beyond comment."

To secure success at the County Council Elections in March, organization must be on a larger scale in proportion as the task is greater, and the candidates must be men who, if returned, can be relied upon to set themselves to the work of undoing the mischief which has been done by the Socialist party, as far as this is possible without breach of existing contracts.

If, for instance, the Thames Steamers, the Works Department, and other concerns, which would come properly within the sphere of private enterprise, were handed over to private firms, not only would the work be done more efficiently and economically, but the Council would have more time and energy to devote to their proper public functions, and one important result of such a change of policy would be to attract into Municipal work men who are not able or not willing to devote their time to directing large trading concerns, and who, being strongly adverse to a shifting of their responsibility on to the shoulders of paid officials whom they are unable to supervise effectively, now on principle remain outside.

The appeal for powers to increase the number of the Council, and the growing disposition to look with favour upon an *ad hoc* body or a more responsible Committee for Education, are no real solution of the difficulty; but they indicate clearly the necessity for the reforms which we are advocating. We are, &c.

Nov., 1906.

MUNICIPAL AND GOVERNMENT TRADING.

By the

Right Hon. Lord Avebury, D.C.L., F.R.S.

Member of Council of the British Constitution Association.

Part I.—Municipal Trading.

In my book on Municipal and National Trading,* I have endeavoured to prove (and I see no reason to change my opinion) :—

1. That Local Expenditure is increasing more rapidly than rateable property.

2. That Local indebtedness is increasing more rapidly than rateable property.

3. That Municipal Trading cannot fail to give rise to difficult labour problems, and may lead to serious corruption.

4. That profits are only made, if at all, when municipalities have a monopoly; they are confined to businesses such as the manufacture of gas, which has long been established and reduced to regular rules; that even in such cases the accounts have been so kept as to make it

*Municipal and National Trading; by Lord Avebury (Macmillan).

impossible to determine what the real result has been; that the profit, if any, has been but small; and that much more satisfactory and remunerative results might have been obtained if the works had been leased to private companies or firms.

5. That Municipal Trading has seriously interfered with private enterprise and commerce.

6. That the State management of Railways is open to similar objections; that on State Railways the fares are higher, the trains slower, fewer and less convenient, and that to introduce questions of railway management into the domain of politics is open to serious objections.

7. That it is unwise to give votes to those who pay no rates, and unjust to withold them from those who do.

8. That Government and Municipal Trading by reducing the demands for labour, while increasing prices and raising rates, has injured, not only the ratepayers generally, but especially the working classes; and if carried to its logical conclusion, it will involve the loss of their freedom.

That the burden of our rates is not only excessive, but increasing, no one can deny; and they will inevitably continue to rise unless some change is made in our policy.

Sir J. W. Benn, though he has himself been one of the most able and active supporters of Municipal Trading and lavish expenditure, recently admitted in the debate on the Agricultural Rates Bill in the House of Commons that "the

position of the London ratepayer has become critical. The increasing rates of London are driving away industries by the dozen," and what is true of London holds good also with reference to other great cities.

In spite of the prosperity of our commerce the building trade is depressed, and no wonder. If it had not been for the increase in the rates many a man would have improved his house, many a railway company would have enlarged their stations, or in other ways have afforded more accommodation to the public, and thus given additional employment to labourers and artisans.

We are told no doubt that Municipalities make profits. But this is only the case where, as in gas works, they have a monopoly. Of course if you have a monopoly and can charge what you like, it is easy to make a so-called profit. They charge the ratepayer a high price and call it a profit.

All monopolies are bad, but Government and Municipal monopolies are the worst, because, when once established, they can neither be regulated, controlled, nor abolished.

By recklessly running the Thames steamers the London County Council admit that they lost over £50,000.

The more this policy has been carried out the worse for the working man. West Ham is a case in point. The rates are very high, industry is driven away, there is too little employment, and the working man suffers in consequence.

The programme of Socialists is that "all the means and instruments of material production, distribution, and exchange should be owned and controlled by the State."*

"The Socialist programme for the recent London County Council election included municipal workshops, municipal stores, municipal milk and bread shops, municipal dairy farms, municipal cottages, free travelling to and from work, municipal coal stores and collieries, municipal farm colonies for the unemployed, paid for by a direct tax on income derived from private industrial concerns, and municipal clothing factories." And these, they tell us, are but "stepping stones in the Socialistic programme."† Socialists, no doubt, think that they are acting in the interest of the working classes. They are entitled to their opinion, and I make no reproach, though I do not agree with them.

Under their system, not only railways, tramways, and gas works, not only manufactories and building concerns, but shops also—milk shops, bakers', butchers', grocers', and the rest—should be run by municipalities.

Perhaps it will be said that Tramways and Waterworks should be worked by the Local Authorities, but that Shops should not be interfered with. But where are we to stop? Why Tramways and not Omnibuses or Cabs? Why water and not bread or meat?

It is sometimes said that the line should be

*The *Times*, Oct. 6, 1906. † The *People*, Sept. 30, 1906.

drawn at necessaries. But if so, to light, gas, water, and tramways, we should have to add bread, meat, fire insurance, clothes, salt, vegetables and groceries.

Shopkeepers, therefore, we see are to be done away with.

This policy is generally advocated as being in the interests of the Working Man.

But those who are engaged in Commerce know that success depends on close attention to details, on watching the turn of the market, on giving mind and thought to the business. It is impossible for the Members of Municipalities to do this, and, consequently, municipal management cannot be as economical or as successful as private management.

Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman, Sir Edward Grey and Lord Rosebery all agree that the London County Council is greatly overworked. This really applies more or less to all municipalities. They cannot look after the details as private firms and companies would; the services and products must, therefore, be more expensive. The national output will be less. Wages, however, in the long run are governed and determined by international competition. Municipal Councils could not raise their wages or they would ruin their markets. Moreover, as Governments and Municipalities would not increase their works, or adopt improvements, so rapidly as private firms and companies, the demand for labour would be less. The difference

could not then be thrown on private enterprise as it is now, because private enterprise by the hypothesis will have been done away with, or rather, will have been driven over sea. With the same, therefore, or probably with lower wages, working men would have to pay a higher price for the necessaries of life.

But this is not all. At present they are free. They can choose their employer, and their employment. Under the new system this would not be possible. They could not choose their employer, for there would only be one. Nor could they choose their employment. If the State or the Municipality is to be responsible for them, workmen would have to do as they are bid. At present, if they do not like their work or their employer, they can change. That would be impossible under the new system which they will have created for themselves. Socialists frankly admit this. For instance, the Fabian Society says:—

"Everyone should have a legal right to an opportunity of earning his living in the society in which he has been born; but no one should or could have the right to ask that he shall be employed at the particular job which suits his peculiar taste and temperament. Each must be prepared to do the work which Society wants doing, or take the consequences of refusal."*

But who is to determine what "Society wants doing"? No doubt some superior official. I

* Fabian Tract, No. 127, Socialism and Labour Policy.

shall indeed be surprised if British Workmen are prepared to surrender their personal freedom and reduce themselves to the position of slaves!

The result to the working classes, then, would be less employment, lower wages, dearer necessaries of life, and—the direst misfortune of all—the loss to a great extent of the personal freedom which they now enjoy.

In cases where a monopoly is almost inevitable I suggest that the "Sliding scale system," which is that adopted in London and several other places, as regards gas, is in my judgment, better for the ratepayers than that of municipal management.

Under this system a sliding scale of price and dividend has been adopted, under which, starting from a given point of price and dividend, the gas companies are enabled for every penny per thousand feet by which they reduce the price of gas to add a quarter per cent. to their dividend, so as to divide any additional profit they may make between the companies and the consumers. As regards Capital, gas companies coming to Parliament for power to raise money are required to put up to auction all the fresh Capital they require, so that any premium on the shares goes into the plant and stock of the Company, and not into the pockets of the shareholders. This plan not only gives the Consumer a share in increased profits, but also gives the Companies a motive for economy.

PART II.—GOVERNMENT TRADING; RAILWAYS AND TELEGRAPHS.

As regards the conduct of commercial undertakings by Governments perhaps the best cases to take are those of railways and telegraphs. It is extremely difficult to compare the work done in Government Dockyards with that of private shipbuilding yards, though it would probably be wise to restrict the former within narrower limits. As regards railways, it is more easy to contrast the two systems. Take, for instance, the case of India.

Mr. Horace Bell, of the Railway Department of the Government of India, not long ago read an interesting paper before the Society of Arts. He said that he was at first very much in favour of the management of railways by the Government, but the result of his experience was to convince him that "the only means of introducing a new and vigorous life into Indian railways is by inducing a free and unrestricted flow of private capital to India, and that this implies the gradual, but eventually complete, abandonment of State administration." In the course of the discussion Sir Juland Danvers, who represented the Government on the Board of the Indian Railways from their infancy, and speaks with perhaps unrivalled experience, expressed his opinion that "the agency of the Companies was, upon the whole, the most satisfactory mode of carrying

out railway enterprise. That seemed to be now the opinion of the Government. Railways, being commercial concerns, were better in the hands of those who could manage them on commercial principles. If the choice was between a State and a Company, the latter was, on the whole, most desirable."

The results, indeed, have been so unsatisfactory that the Government recently selected Mr. Thomas Robertson to make a Report on the Administration and Working of the Indian Railways. After an elaborate inquiry he came to the conclusion that "the working of the Indian Railways cannot be regarded as at all satisfactory. But I attribute this more to the system than to any individual action on the part of the railway or Government officers. . . But after long and anxious consideration, the conclusion forced on me is that root-and-branch reform alone will be productive of lasting good, and that if the development of railways in India is not to be hampered, and if they are to render that full and efficient service to the country of which they are capable, they must be permitted to be worked more as commercial enterprise than they have in the past."

He points out that the average speed "is not as high as might have been expected"; that it "is so low as seriously to interfere with the proper development of the traffic," and that "before the rates and fares in India can be regarded relatively as equal to those in England, the

former will require to be lower than the rates now charged—for passengers, by about 18 per cent. to 40 per cent.; for general merchandise, by about from 30 per cent. to 60 per cent.; and for coal, by about 40 per cent. to 60 per cent." An even more important and unfortunate result is the effect which the Government policy has had in checking the construction of railways in India. Investors, not unnaturally, say that if a railway would pay it would be constructed by Government, and that if Government does not care to build it the reason is that they know it would not be remunerative. English capital, therefore, flows elsewhere.

As to the result of Government interference on the construction of railways, we have an object-lesson if we compare India with Argentina, where the construction and management of railways have been left to private enterprise. The population of India (1904) is over 290,000,000, and the miles of railway 27,000, or one mile to every 11,600 people.

In Argentina the population is mainly Spanish, and the country is agricultural. The Government has been in great financial troubles. Nevertheless, with a population of four millions and a half, they have over 12,000 miles of railway (mostly made with English capital), or a mile to every 450 persons. If India had the same mileage of railways in proportion to population, she would have, not 25,000 miles of railway but 644,000 miles. Now, why does

English capital go to make railways in a foreign country, and not to India, a part of our Empire? Because, as the Government interferes, others are deterred from entering the field. They naturally say, if any line is proposed by private enterprise, that, if it was likely to pay, the Government would build it. I cannot doubt that the policy of successive Governments in this respect has had a serious and unfortunate effect on the prosperity of India.

When Prince Bismarck persuaded the German Diet to purchase the Railways he did so on the plea that the State would be able to lower fares. The result, however, has been the very reverse.

For instance, in 1888 the landowners and farmers of East Prussia petitioned the Government to reduce the rates on agricultural produce, and especially on grain, which had remained the same since 1877. This would have been a great boon to the manufacturers and people of Central and Western Prussia, but it was strenuously opposed by the agricultural interests, on the ground that it would lower prices and thus affect their profits. Saxony, which lies about half-way between Eastern and Western Prussia, and other central States also opposed, and eventually the Governments of Saxony, Baden, Wurtemburg, and Bavaria notified the Prussian Government that their representatives in the Reichstag and Bundesrat would oppose the Imperial Bill authorising a commercial treaty with Russia, unless the proposal to lower the

rates on grain from Eastern Prussia should be abandoned, and the Prussian Government found themselves for the time compelled to give way.

Again, the Railway Department commenced issuing cheap return tickets to labourers from East Prussia going to the Elbe district to harvest the crops. This was a great boon to the Elbe farmers, and also to the peasants, who obtained a welcome and much-needed addition to their scanty earnings. The landowners and farmers of East Prussia, however, objected that the system raised the wages they had to pay, and the Government again found themselves compelled to raise the fares.

Moreover, apart from the commercial disadvantages, the German Government has found to its cost that constitutents carry their grievances as regards railway management into National politics.

As regards other countries, Lord Farrer, in his work on Express Trains,* tells us, after his careful comparison, that: . . . "it certainly appears from our figures that those countries which have given freest scope for private energy have obtained the fullest reward. It is frequently forgotten that in questions of administration, Government officers are only human beings after all, and do not differ in kind from other individuals, while the able and original minded men among Government servants are certainly more hampered—by quite unnecessary

* Express Trains.

red-tape regulations—in carrying out fresh ideas than are the servants of private enterprise. The danger of this criticism developing into complete control is the rock ahead, for as soon as Government obtains control, private enterprise will wither."

Mr. Ackworth concludes his inquiry as follows:—

"A careful study of the evidence has convinced me that in the long run State control ends in keeping down the best to the level of the worst, and that, taking them for all in all, the private railway companies of England and the United States have served the public better than the Government Railways of the Continent or of our Australian Colonies, and—which is still more to the point—are likely to serve it better in the future."*

The late Lord Farrer said:—"The development of railway communication in Great Britain has been such as no Government management, however good, could possibly have produced.

No one, indeed, who looks dispassionately into the evidence can doubt that the State management of the Railways has been a great misfortune for the Continent, and that our trade and commerce have benefited immensely by the energy and enterprise of our Railway Companies and their very able officials."†

* The Railways and the Traders.
† The State in its relation to Trade.

With regard to Telegraphs and Telephones, the Government having purchased the telegraphs, have from the first regarded the telephone with the utmost jealousy. They could not in decency deprive Mr. Edison and his associates of all participation in the advantages of his remarkable invention. They insisted, however, on being paid one-tenth, not of the profits, but of the gross receipts. What would have happened to our railways, I may ask, if they had been so treated? They are now receiving £200,000 a year from the company and the amount is yearly increasing. Not content with this they have determined to buy up the company and work it in conjunction with the telegraph. This is surely an extraordinary and most unfortunate policy.

In reply to a deputation by which this policy was pressed on the Government, Mr. Hanbury, then Secretary to the Treasury, said:—

"He hardly thought the deputation had given full weight to the serious difficulties in the way of nationalisation. He doubted whether it was expedient to increase the amount of work done by the State generally. The Post Office was being over-burdened with work in every direction, and he did not think that it was capable of taking this enormous additional burden. If the telephone service was cast upon the Post Office it would be to the detriment of both the postal and telegraph services. Then, again, it would increase enormously the Government

Staff. He need only appeal to the Members of Parliament present to say whether they would like to have the weekly appeals for increase of wages from those State servants still further extended."*

There we have his opinion. But what did he do? Exactly the reverse. He did the very thing he so clearly condemned. I fear we shall pay dearly for the course which has been adopted.

The country has lost over £10,000,000 by Government management of the telegraph. Last year the deficit was £439,000, † so that if we had been presented with the system as a free gift we should still have lost heavily. It is sometimes said that this is due to the lowering of the charge from a shilling to sixpence. But the Committee appointed by the Treasury reported that the loss was mainly due to more expensive working.

Moreover, to the £439,000 we must add the loss of interest on the amount laid out by the country since the purchase? This amounts to over £200,000, at moderate estimate, bringing the loss up to £639,000. But this is not all. It includes no allowance for wear and tear.

Any reasonable person would consider that under these circumstances the wise course would be to abandon the policy by which we were los-

*_The Times_, May 4th, 1899.
† Report of the Postmaster General, 1906.

ing over £1,000,000 a year, and adopt the policy by which we were making £200,000. As a matter of fact we are doing exactly the reverse. It makes one doubt whether we are really endowed with the gift of reason.

OLD AGE PENSIONS—THE BETTER WAY.

A Question for Friendly Societies.

By Sir William Chance, bt.

Chairman of Council of the British Constitution Association.

The increasing burden of taxation, both local and imperial, is a cause of great anxiety, and yet, while everyone is crying out against it, our party politicians, instead of putting a curb on expenditure, seem bent on adding to it. The cost of the establishment of any system of old age pensions out of the public purse cannot, I think, be really appreciated, or the suggestion would not be received quite so calmly as appears to be the case.

I desire then, to draw attention firstly to the cost of two possible schemes (the only two which will, metaphorically speaking, hold water); and, secondly, to show how old age pensions can be provided without any demands being made on the community as a whole.

If State aid is to be invoked at all, the schemes must be either (1) universal, or (2) limited to some class or classes of old people, poor and of decent character.

The universal scheme is that apparently supported by the present Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Thus in answer to a deputation of 70 or 80 Liberal and Labour members who waited upon them at the House of Commons on the 20th November, 1900, asking that the question should be placed in the front of the legislative programme for the coming Session, the Prime Minister said that any scheme must be universal in its application, and that it must be done by the State, which alone had the means. It is true that, while expressing this opinion, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman added that the question depended on time and means permitting, but we must take it that, when and if the present Government see their way to prepare a scheme, it will be one for universal pensions.

Now, what will be the cost? Certainly not less than £25,000,000 at the present time, taking the pension age as 65, and the amount of the pension as £13 a year (*i.e.*, 5s. a week). Allowing for the natural increase of population, this cost will rise to £45,000,000 by 1941. Our whole national expenditure amounted to £140,511,955 in 1905-06 and economists are never weary of protesting against the increasing burden on the taxpayers and on the industries of the country. Yet the Prime Minister and his Chancellor of the Exchequer, who are, so to speak, sworn to economy, seem to be willing, with a light heart, to add another £25,000,000 to this huge sum. And

society will cover both sick pay up to the fixed age and old age pay after that age. This system has been already tried. I need only give two instances. The Sheffield and Hallamshire branch of the Ancient Order of Foresters adopted it some years ago. In that district there are 34 branch courts. In 16 of them it is compulsory on all new entrants to subscribe for sick allowances up to 65 years of age, with an old age pension allowance of 5s. a week after that age. In these branches no difficulty has been found in securing new entrants; on the contrary, the increase of membership comes from the 16 branches, showing how much the system is appreciated. Of the 16 branches, six made the system compulsory on their members, and the other 10 adopted it voluntarily.

Now what sum suffices to obtain these benefits (10s. a week for 26 weeks' sickness, 7s. 6d. for the next 26 weeks, 5s. a week for remainder of illness, 5s. a week old age pension, and £10 at death)? 1s. a fortnight for any young man, joining between 16 and 20 years of age. The highest contribution for the same benefits is 2s. 6d. a fortnight for any man joining between 39 and 40. And the system can be adopted for female courts, for one branch of the district is composed entirely of women, to all of whom 5s. a week will be paid upon their attaining 65 years of age.

The Ipswich District of the Oddfellows (Manchester Unity) affords another example. It was

introduced in the Orwel Lodge of this District in 1885 in a permissive form, and was made compulsory in 1892. The whole District adopted it in 1601, and the country Lodges which most dreaded the change took the lead in this. The payments are somewhat higher in the case of younger members than in the Sheffield and Hallamshire case, but then the sick pay is also higher in proportion. All the payments are, however, well within the means of the wage earning classes. "In financial matters the District maintains a decidedly progressive condition, and the continued growth in numbers of those contributing for old age pensions gives promise of stability of a most encouraging character" (Report of the District, 1906).

Why, then, it will be asked, have not the great Friendly Societies set themselves strenuously to provide their members with old age pensions, if they are so much appreciated, as the experience of the two Districts referred to shows?

The reason is very simple. The promise of leading party politicians that the State would intervene has put a stop to such an effort. That this is the true answer is clearly shown by the account of the last meeting of the Oddfellows' A.M.C., when the proposition, supported by a large minority of the delegates present, that "for all members initiated after August 1st, 1907, each District shall provide in its rules for sick pay to age 65 and a superannuation benefit after that age," was rejected, solely owing to the ex-

pectation that the State would provide the pension.

It is a well-known fact that few members of good Friendly Societies ever come upon the rates at any period of life, even in old age. This is owing, no doubt, as regards aged members, to the grant of permanent sick pay. But this pay is a great drain on the resources of the societies, a drain which was not actuarilly contemplated, and which has tended to impair their credit.

To establish "combined tables" would undoubtedly increase the stability of Friendly Societies, and I have shown how this can be and is being done. I have tried to point out the better way. It is a thousand pities that the Friendly Societies should have allowed themselves to be diverted from it by the attractions of an illusively easier road. But it is by self-help and co-operation for definite ends that the condition of the wage-earning classes has been raised, and it is by these means only that it can be raised still more. They can gain nothing by increased taxation for the benefit of a mere fraction of themselves. No taxation should be imposed which is not for the benefit of all classes of the community. We must expect taxation to increase with advancing civilisation, greater material wants, and a rise in the standard of life. But it can never be economical to raise a general tax for the benefit of one portion of the community only. Taxation must always fall

more heavily on the poor than on the rich, even though the former may not feel it directly, and they will pay far less by providing for old age by their own efforts than by allowing the State to tax them for that purpose.

June, 1907.

PAYMENT OF MEMBERS.

By Mr. J. St. Loe Strachey.
Member of Council of the British Constitution Association.

I do not resist the proposal in favour of the Payment of Members because I think that an unpaid House is likely to contain more members of the moderate and conservative classes than a paid one, or because I wish to throw any obstacle in the way of the freest choice as to their Members being accorded to the constituencies. My objections are very different from these. In the first place I object to the very great waste of public money involved in the proposal to pay every Member of Parliament whether he wants to be paid or not. It is all very well to talk as if £200,000 a year were a mere bagatelle but, as the Prime Minister very pertinently reminded the House last year, the provision of an extra £200,000 would be a serious difficulty to a Treasury faced with the immediate problem of how to reduce taxation below its present level and to maintain efficiency in all departments of State. After all, to add £200,000 a year permanently to the charges on the people is equivalent to a capital expendi-

ture of some seven millions sterling. Frankly, I would far rather pay off seven millions of the National Debt than shower £300 a year on all Members of Parliament, especially when I know that some five hundred of that number are not the least in want of it, and can keep their places in Parliament without it.

Next, I object to the proposal that Parliament should dip into the Treasury and pay itself, on the ground that to do so must to a certain extent lower the position of Parliament. I am old-fashioned enough and Whiggish enough to feel, and to value the feeling, that the House of Commons is the master of the State. But the mark of the master is to pay, not to be paid. There is nothing derogatory, nay there is everything that is honourable, in being a servant of the State, whether as Admiral or General, or as Cabinet Minister or other member of the Government, and such servants of the State are rightly paid by the State. The House of Commons, however, as the paymaster of these public servants, considers, and very properly considers, that it is their master, and they must bow in the last resort to its decisions. When the Members of Parliament, who exercise the controlling power in the State, are paid just as their own servants out of the funds of the nation, it is impossible but that they will lose a certain sense of power and authority. Not only will the salaried servants of the State

feel that they are now on the same level as the House of Commons, but those who are more highly paid than Members of Parliament will not unnaturally consider that the State regards them as worth more than its representatives. Put the matter in yet another way; there is no sounder maxim in English law than that a trustee shall not pay himself for the execution of his trust out of trust funds. But a Member of Parliament is essentially a trustee of the public interests and the public funds, and when he pays himself he cannot but lower himself from the highest position of trusteeship. Burke says somewhere: "I own that being a judge in my own cause makes me afraid." But a Member of Parliament who thinks himself worth £300 a year to the nation and votes himself £300 every year, is necessarily a judge in his own cause. He is not only declaring himself to be worth payment, but actually fixing his own remuneration.

No palliation in the objections I have raised is to be found in the smallness of the sum proposed to be voted. If once Members are to be paid a salary, I cannot believe that such salary will remain at £300 a year. The argument in favour of either adequate salaries or no salaries for men doing important and responsible work is unanswerable. If a man is to get payment for his work, it is unquestionably sounder policy to pay him a sum large enough to free *him from* the temptation to neglect that work

or to abuse his opportunities of making indirect gain. For the highest work the rule should be, "gratis, or a big salary." If, then, Payment of Members is adopted, we may expect in a very few years to find an agitation on foot, and an agitation with a great deal to recommend it, in favour of paying Members of Parliament at least as highly as County Court Judges, or of giving them £1,200 a year each,—a sum, by the way, which is received by American Senators and Members of the House of Representatives. America is notoriously the land of low official salaries, and if American Members of Parliament require £1,200 a year, is it not reasonable to urge that we should pay at least that sum to our representatives?

Yet another objection is to be found in the fact that if Members of Parliament are to be paid, so ought members of County Councils, Town Councils, and other elective bodies. The work done by members of these representative bodies is often very arduous and very exacting, and the case for their payment is every bit as strong as that for paying Members of Parliament. But if all elected persons are to be paid, and paid a living wage, the charge on the nation will not be kept at £200,000 a year, but may easily reach two millions. Unless we steadily maintain the principle that the man honoured by the choice of his fellow-countrymen is a trustee for public interests, and must assume the trustee's position, the posi-

tion of the master and not of the servant—the position, that is, of the man who gives the order, and not of him who executes it—it seems to me absolutely impossible to pay one class of popular representatives and not another. The technical objection may, perhaps, be made that we do pay Members of Parliament when they are Ministers of the Crown. That is perfectly true, but we pay them because they have become what under one of the useful fictions of the Constitution we term "servants of the Crown"—*i.e.*, of the State—and not in respect of their position as popular representatives. I do not suggest that a man may not be a servant of the State as well as a popular representative. All I say is that, though he may be paid in the one capacity, he ought not to be paid in the other.

Though it was, no doubt, the desire of many of the advocates of Payment of Members to increase the representation of the working classes in Parliament, I am by no means sure that such an aim will be achieved if the principle be put in practice. It is far more likely that the effect of giving £300 a year to every Member of Parliament will be to encourage the entry of the professional politician and of the smaller professional man into the House of Commons. The ambitious man of this type will argue: "If I can get into the House, the £300 a year will clear my out-of-pocket expenses, and the great advertisement obtained by my entry into

Parliament will enable me to increase my earnings as a solicitor"—or a barrister, or a commercial man, as the case may be. Now, though I do not wish to disparage the professional politician unduly, I cannot disguise from myself the fact that the presence of a large body of its members will decrease the weight and authority of Parliament. The American House of Representatives and the French Chamber are full of such men, but yet those bodies cannot be said to exercise anything like the influence on national affairs exercised by the House of Commons; and, moreover, they do not contain anything like the same number of the genuine representatives of Labour. In my opinion, indeed, the Labour Party, if they are wise, will realise that they are far more likely to lose than to gain by Payment of Members. The genuine Labour Member will run the risk, I believe, of being shouldered out of political life by the glib professional politician who is able to make himself a position in the party caucus. At the last General Election, and in dread of the tremendous evil threatened to the working classes by the prospect of a return to Protection, skilled and unskilled labour for the first time since the lowering of the franchise voted together. But this is not a permanent amalgamation, and I venture to think that the professional politician will, under normal conditions, be able to make an appeal to unskilled labour which will give him an advantage over the Trade

Union representative, whose appeal is, as a rule, to skilled, or at any rate organized, labour. But the unskilled and the unorganized labourers outnumbered the skilled and organized, and therefore it may well be that the adoption of Payment of Members, with the opportunities it gives to the professional politician, will militate against the Parliamentary representation of the Trade Unionists. A cynical politician anxious to divide and break up the solidarity of Labour would use all his influence in favour of the policy.

My opinion on the merits is, then, strongly against Payment of Members, partly because it will lower the power and influence of the House of Commons, and also because in the end it will not secure a greater or better representation to Labour. If, however, it should be deemed essential by the working classes that their representative should be paid, and the nation as a whole endorse their view, then I hold that the proper way to give effect to their decision is not by voting £300 a year to every Member of Parliament, but by allowing any constituency which so desires to levy a local rate to keep its Member of Parliament in London without any pecuniary cost to himself. This plan has the advantage that it reverts to the old Constitutional usage under which Members were paid what was termed their "wages" by the constituencies that sent them to Parliament. As is well known, Andrew Marvell was the last

man to receive his Parliamentary wages, but before his time it was quite common for Members chosen by counties and boroughs to exact payment from those who sent them. Under this plan Members could not be accused of dipping into the national Treasury, in respect of which they are appointed trustees, and also no payment need be made to Members who were perfectly able to keep themselves in London out of their own resources. I am aware, of course, that it will be said that this proposal is a mere subterfuge for burking the whole question, and that no candidate would be able to get returned for a locality unless he first promised that he would never ask for his wages. I do not agree. I believe that in many democratic constituencies, if the electors were intent on choosing a working man, they would be perfectly prepared to vote him the farthing or half-a-farthing rate necessary to keep him in the House of Commons. If a constituency wanted John Smith rather than Richard Brown, I do not believe that the fact that it was known that John Smith would add £300 a year to the rates while Richard Brown would work for nothing would in any way influence the decision. And remember that under the proposed universal payment it will be possible for the rich Member to appeal for votes on the ground that he does not want his salary of £300 a year. The rich man can say: "If I am elected I shall be obliged to receive £300 a year from the Treas-

ury; but this sum I do not require, and I do not intend to spend it on myself. If elected I shall spend it upon public objects in the constituency." Possibly so open an announcement might be considered a corrupt practice, but in that event it would be perfectly easy for the candidate, without saying so, to let his intention be known. Or again, if actual expenditure within the constituency, such as subscriptions to local charities, &c., were thought to be too dangerous, the Member might quite well expend his salary on national objects which interested a large number of persons in his division. For example, a Member might let it be known that his £300 a year, so long as he was in Parliament, would go to the Liberation Society, or the Church Defence Association, or to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, or some other public body of a like kind. In some way or other the rich man could find means of making it known that he would not touch his £300 a year, but would return it to the people.

THE STATE FEEDING OF CHILDREN.

By Sir Arthur Clay, Bt.,

Member of Committee of the British Constitution Association.

The Educational (Provision of Meals Act), 1906, contemplates the provision of school meals, for all children attending public Elementary Schools who may desire to have them, on payment of a sum to be fixed by the Local Education Authority.

There is a wide difference between this and the provision of meals for necessitous children only. There is abundant evidence to prove that the number of children in Elementary Schools who stand in need of this relief is but small, far smaller than is popularly imagined. It has also been clearly established that private charity is fully capable of dealing successfully with such need as does exist; and so long as the number of children receiving meals is not artificially increased to unmanageable proportions the requirements in the way of appliances and service

of meals can be provided, as they are at present, by an inexpensive adaptation of existing means.

If, however, a Local Education Authority should decide to carry out the Act in its entirety, and provide meals not only for necessitous but for all children whose parents will pay for them, costly and elaborate buildings, appliances, service, and supervision will be found necessary.

There can be no doubt that such an arrangement would be a great convenience to many parents and a benefit to children whose parents (not from want of means but from ignorance or idleness) fail to provide them with a satisfactory meal at home.

It is therefore probable that a large and constantly increasing number of parents would avail themselves of the offer, but it must be remembered that, apart from the enormous cost, there are grave moral objections to such a system.

The care of children and the necessity of providing, even at much personal sacrifice, for their wants and comforts, are discipline of great moral value, and act as a constant restraint against self-indulgence and drink; the offer of a meal at school would be a strong temptation to give up the irksome but wholesome work of preparing it at home; it would make it far easier than it is at present for married women to go out to work, and would thus tend to retard the success of the true remedy, that is, such wages as would enable a workman to support his family adequately, and to give up the home

mid-day meal would be to strike a blow at family life.

Whilst, therefore, there may be good grounds for the establishment of some such system in rural schools where the distance makes it impossible for the children to go home to dinner, there is no sufficient reason for incurring these dangers and introducing the system in provincial towns or in the Metropolis, where as a general rule, their homes are within easy reach of the children.

Since the chief object of the Act was said to be the relief of necessitous children, it is somewhat difficult to understand why its operation should have been thus extended to *all* Elementary School Children. When it is remembered, however, that the driving force which ensured the passing of the Act was supplied by the Socialist Labour Party, that that Party have constantly proclaimed their object to be the "State maintenance" of children, and that they look upon this Act merely as a step towards that end, we can see how it is that this extension of powers (which, if acted upon, would give them such material assistance in securing their object) came to be inserted. It must be remembered also that the energy which procured the passing of this Act will now be directed to securing the full logical development of the powers it confers.

Whether or not this explanation is the correct one, the statutory power exists, and any Local Education Authority that chooses to adopt it has

(under Clause 1, Sub-section *b*) the power, limited only by their own discretion, to provide all buildings, appliances, etc., they may think necessary, and to provide meals for all the children in their Elementary Schools. The payment to be fixed can be calculated only on the cost of the provisions, since if regard were to be paid to the cost of buildings, etc., it is obvious that the price would be prohibitive.

Whatever the payment may be, all experience proves that (except when the numbers dealt with are small, and effective supervision is therefore practicable) free meals and paid-for meals cannot co-exist, the proportion borne by the number of paid for meals to that of the free meals invariably becomes smaller and smaller.*

It is necessarily a thankless and unwelcome task to extort these payments, and the duty thrown by Clause 2 (1) of the Act upon the Local Educational Authority of prosecuting the parent who, being able, refuses to pay, will probably lead to their being very easily satisfied that, in the words of the Act, he is unable to do so, "owing to circumstances other than his own default." In thus following the line of least resistance Local Educational Authorities will be encouraged by the result of attempting to obtain payment for money spent on providing meals under the Local Government Board Order,

* When first a Municipal subsidy was granted in 1879-80 to the Cantines Scolaires of Paris the proportion of paid-for to free meals was 67 to 33 per cent., by 1905 it had fallen to 35 to 65 per cent.

1905, in Bradford.* Once adopted, the natural impulses of human nature and the force of circumstances will co-operate in continually extending the operation of the Act in the direction of universal free feeding of Elementary School Children, and since want of food is but a comparatively minor cause of their troubles, the removal of this cause only, at the expense of the public, will be an obviously inadequate method of dealing with the question; other causes of distress, such as the want of boots, clothes, etc., have an equal claim to consideration and removal, and the Socialist goal of State maintenance will then be well in sight.

When the power now conferred upon the Local Education Authorities to add at their discretion to the cost of Education by the erection of buildings, etc., is considered, it will be recognised that this Act constitutes a grave menace to the cause of Education (by no means too popular already), which would be seriously retarded and injured by the imposition of these heavy and unnecessary burdens.

Happily the Act is permissive and it is not incumbent upon Local Educational Authorities to adopt it.

There is ample evidence to show that the ostensible object of the Act can be satisfactorily secured without its aid, and it may be hoped that the common sense of the Community and

* £1,323 was spent on providing meals, of which £3 0s. 3d. only was recovered from parents.

of the Local Educational Authorities, recognising the dangers involved in its operation, will render the Act innocuous by allowing it to remain a dead letter.

April, 1907.

THE SMALL LANDOWNER.

By the Hon. Percy Wyndham.
Deputy Chairman of Council of the British Constitution Association.

In considering the Small Landowner, why he has gradually disappeared, and why if replaced upon the land he is not likely to remain upon it, one consideration dominates the whole question. It is that the value of land in the market exceeds and has for many years always exceeded its economic value to work. Whatever the nature of the land may be, whether the soil be rich or poor, in excess of its economic value is the price the wealthy man is ready to pay for it, on account of its amenities, and for the pleasure of owning it. Owning land when the owner has plenty of money besides, and owning land when you have to make your living out of it, are two entirely different conditions of things.

This is a fact which many who take a sentimental view of the question entirely ignore. People whose knowledge of land is confined to occasional visits to the country indulge in the fancy picture, the idea that it would be delightful to be a Small Landowner, and to leave the

land from father to son, from generation to generation.

I will not say that this type of Small Landowner does not exist, but it is far rarer than is commonly supposed, and its continuance for three generations is so rare as to be not worth consideration.

Before long you have the man who has never married, or the man who has quarrelled with his son, and with all his relations into the bargain, or the man who has indulged in pleasures and lived beyond his means. These, all from different reasons, arrive at the same conclusion, and say to themselves, "Why should I live the life of a dog and work early and late to make a miserable forty or fifty pounds a year, when, if I accepted the price Mr. So and So's or Lord So and So's agent offers me I could live in affluence for the rest of my days."

There have been other Small Landowners whose ultimate fate has been prolonged. These are the men who either from misfortune or extravagance have exceeded their means. They, however, love their land and cling to it. Mortgage follows mortgage till at length the interest can no longer be paid, and foreclosure terminates their existence as landowners.

In some very rare instances they have been saved by outside influences. While I resided in the County of Cumberland more than one case came to my notice where a younger son had gone to London, made a fortune in business,

and, returning, paid off the mortgages on the family property, and set the elder brother, the head of the family, the statesman as he would be called in that country, on his legs again.

If we go back to the time when the economic value of land to work was far higher than it is at present, we find that from different causes the consolidation of the land into fewer hands went on. The high prices of wheat during the long war in the first quarter of the late century affected the yeomen of the County of Sussex in different ways, and changed the condition of the Small Landowners, who were at that date far more numerous than they are at present. Some were led to keeping packs of harriers, to constant hospitality and drinking, ruin supervened, and their estates were bought up by their neighbours, the more prudent owners. The descendants of these latter are now among the County Families. The experience of Sussex was probably the experience of other counties.

The causes, however, now at work are, as I have already said, the fact that the value of land to sell is largely in excess of its economic value to work. It is true that this excess is not now so great as between 1855—75, but it is still very considerable, and unless great catastrophies should occur there is no probability of the change in these conditions; for these reasons I am of opinion that though legislation as advocated by Mr. Jesse Collings may be the means of planting

the Small Landowner on the land, it will be beyond any one's power to keep him there.

The Government of the day by the Bill before Parliament in the Session of 1907, determined to increase the number of Small Landholders, who, however, were to be prevented from becoming the owners of the land they occupy. The indirect effect of the Allotment Acts of 1887 and of 1890 was very largely to increase by voluntary action the number of allotments throughout the whole of England.

The Small Holdings Act of 1892 was not so successful. I do not think that this was caused by any unwillingness on the part of County Councils to move in the matter. I have every reason to believe that every genuine application was enquired into. The natural tendency under our long continued agricultural depression has been towards increasing the size of holdings, not towards diminishing them. The poorer soils can only be cultivated with success in large holdings by men of high intelligence, with plenty of capital.

To give an extreme instance of this tendency, I may mention that a syndicate of three men farm nearly 20,000 acres of land in the County of Wilts. In the Counties of Wilts and Hants the best land lays along the valleys by the rivers. These valleys are not more than a quarter of a mile in width. The high poorer land on either side, now letting at from 2s. 6d. to 7s. an *acre,* could only be let if a small portion of good

grass land is let with it; but it is the small strip of land along the water in these districts that alone is suitable for small holdings. The large farmers, of whom I speak, are men who employ the most labour, and pay the best wages; to disturb them would prove a calamity for the neighbourhood. So much is this the case that when in one of the enquiries into an application under the Small Holdings Act of 1892, the applicant was shown that he could only be gratified by ousting so and so from his holding, he replied that that was far from his desire.

In addition to good land, two other conditions are requisite to the success of the small holder, they are first, the propinquity of a good market, and, secondly, easy access to it. Common rights are a great help, and also the association of some other trade or calling with that of land-owning. Thus, the position of the Small Land-holder in the neighbourhood of the New Forest is ideal. The turning-out rights enable him to keep more stock, and a greater variety of stock than he could keep if restricted to his holding, while he has such markets as Southampton and Bournemouth on either side, and easy access to both. It is to be hoped, then, when any new Act comes to be applied, the above considerations may not altogether be lost sight of. County Councils with the Board of Agriculture behind them are enjoined to go into the highways and byways and compel the small holder to come in.

The central authority has suggested that the

County Councils should not wait till the Bill becomes law, but that they should now address enquiries to the minor local authorities as to whether there are any applicants for small holdings in their district, and what means exist for meeting their wants. These enquiries are to be repeated at stated intervals, the local authorities who may reply in the negative are in effect to be asked whether they are quite sure no one wants a small holding, and to think over the matter again. Surely it would have been enough if the minor local authorities had been authorised to make at any time a requisition on the matter when they thought fit. Compulsion, however, pervaded the whole Bill, and under such conditions it is to be feared that the unfortunate ratepayer may be saddled with some hard bargains as tenants: men who may be willing to come on the land as long as it suits them, or as long as they are allowed to remain, but with no very definite intention of paying rent.

By an amendment accepted by Mr. Harcourt, such a loss if it occurs would be transferred in whole or in part from the shoulders of the ratepayers to those of the taxpayer; whether this would make it more palatable remains to be seen.

July, 1907.

THE NEW CANUTE.

By Mr. Mark H. Judge,
Chairman of Committee of the British Constitution Association.

The Oxford Conference of the British Constitution Association, in July, 1907, was not only successful in itself, but its success was emphasized by the admirable reports which appeared in the Press throughout the country. Among the many articles on the Conference was the following in the *Oxford Chronicle* of July 19th, under the title of "The New Canute" :—

"We give considerable space to-day to a report of the Conference held at the end of last week in Oxford by a body which chooses—not very happily one may venture to think—the name of the 'British Constitutional Association.' The object of the Association is to combat Socialism—'to maintain,' in the words of Mr. St. Loe Strachey, the able Editor of the *Spectator*, 'the individualist principle as opposed to the Socialist principle as the foundation of any Government or national policy.' But what does the Constitutional Association mean by Socialism? The speeches made at the Conference answer the

question. It is not merely to Utopian schemes for social regeneration—schemes such as those for the nationalization of land and industries which extremists like Mr. Keir Hardy and M. Jaures advocate—that the Constitutional Association offers opposition. Practically it opposes the whole trend of modern democratic legislation. . . . The Socialistic or Collectivist ideal has been aptly defined by Professor Dicey as 'the equalization of advantages.' And most of the so-called Socialistic tendencies against which the Constitutional Association most sternly sets its face make for the 'equalization of advantages.' . . . The object of the Constitutional Association, we may assume, is not to lead the country back to the days before the Factory Laws and the Education Acts, but, standing aside from the two great political parties, to check the further advance of the Collectivist tide. It is the task of a new Canute, who would 'bid the main flood bate its usual height.' It may be freely admitted, however, that an Association, voicing, say, the views of Mill and the older economists, might do extremely useful work in subjecting Collectivist legislation—from whichever political party it came—to close scrutiny and in keeping before the public the fact that individual effort must always be one of the main instruments in bringing about social amelioration. The Constitutional Association, unfortunately, goes much further than this, and shows a narrowness of

outlook which sadly diminishes its claim to serious consideration. Nothing could be more unfortunate than its opposition to 'State Control of Secondary Schools' and 'the general provision of higher education at the public expense.' . . . But perhaps the most regrettable feature of the Constitutional Association's Conference was the inclination shown to unfairly disparage the work of our municipalities. 'He had a great dread of entrusting our municipal bodies with money,' Mr. F. Curran, of Lincoln College, declared at Friday's Conference. 'He would give them as little as possible.'"

A letter, dated July 20th, from the Chairman of Committee of the Association was published on July 26th, as follows:—

"*To the Editor of the 'Oxford Chronicle.'*

"SIR,—I beg to thank you for your admirable reports of the Conference of the British Constitutional Association held in your city last week. Oxford is to be congratulated on having a local Press which so thoroughly performs the most important function of newspapers—the furnishing of news. I also desire to thank you for the very frank and courteous criticisms contained in your leading article to-day. Those criticisms deserve, and shall receive, every consideration. The points you raise are of such importance that I intend to submit them to a joint meeting of the

Council and Committee to be held on Friday next, in order that the reply to your remarks may be stamped with approval of the two governing bodies of the Association. In the meantime let me place before your readers a few parts with regard to the name and work of the Association.

"In addition to the short title, 'British Constitutional Association,' all our publications and note-paper have the words 'To uphold the fundamental principle of the British Constitution—personal liberty and personal responsibility—and limit the functions of governing bodies accordingly.'

"I look forward to the time when the British Constitutional Association will do for politics that which the British Association is doing for science. There is a parallel in the matter of name. One to whom the British Association is unknown would require, in order to understand the short title, the words 'For the advancement of science.'

"To illustrate our methods of work let me quote the following from the first annual report of the Association: 'The Association is so constituted that it may support or oppose the policy of any political party without taking sides in partisan politics. In other words, whenever any party proposes legislation conducive to the protection or promotion of true liberty, and calculated to place on each individual citizen that personal responsibility which best educes national

character, the Association would support such proposals with all the means in their power. Similarly it would oppose proposals calculated to produce contrary effects.'

"I quote the following from the first annual report of the Council as evidence of the judgment with which the Association has hitherto been guided :—'The Council is charged with the duty of deciding what Parliamentary measures the Association shall support or oppose, whether such measures be for the enactment of new laws or the amendment or repeal of existing laws. The Council recognizes the great responsibility which this duty involves, and has therefore given the most careful consideration to every proposal submitted to it. It is obvious that if the Association is to be a power in resisting Socialism it must, while affording a free platform for academic discussion, limit its active interference with the politics of our time to such action as will command the cordial support of the members and associates of the Association. The problem before the Council in this matter is the finding of what may be not inaptly termed the greatest common measure of opinion in the Association. Those who hold opinions outside this common measure will best help forward the cause of personal liberty and responsibility by hearty co-operation with the Association in all those measures in which there is agreement, reserving for another platform the advocacy of

views not in accord with the general opinion of the Association.' "

The Chairman's second letter was dated July 26th, and was as follows :—

" *To the Editor of the 'Oxford Chronicle.'*

" SIR,— As promised in my letter of the 21st inst., I submitted your leader, entitled the 'New Canute,' to a meeting of the Council and Committee of the British Constitution Association this afternoon, when this letter was also read and unanimously endorsed.

" You took exception to the name of the Association, and we admit that, the word 'Constitutional' having been largely adopted by one of the great political parties, some may have been confused. To prevent all possible confusion in the future the following resolution has been passed, viz. : 'That the letters 'al' be deleted from the name of the Association, so that in future the name shall be the British Constitution Association.'

" King Canute was not the least of the great personal forces which went to make our island's history one of which we are proud, and the Council and Committee consider you have paid the Association a great compliment by dubbing it the 'New Canute.' How effectively that great king rebuked his courtiers when they told him he could resist the laws of Nature is matter

of history. The rebuke would have been none the less effective had the king been one half of the people plus one, instead of one great personality. Whether the authority of kingship be given to an individual or to a multitude, that authority can only be exercised in conformity with Nature's laws, resistance in the one case being as futile as in the other.

"You are correct in assuming that the object of the Association 'is not to lead the country back to the days before the Factory Laws and the Education Acts, but, standing aside from the two great political parties, to check the further advance of the Collectivist tide,' and we are glad that you see with us that an association 'voicing the views of Mill and the older economists might do extremely useful work in subjecting Collectivist legislation—from whichever political party it came—to close scrutiny, and in keeping before the public the fact that individual effort must always be one [we say *the* one] of the main instruments in bringing about social amelioration.'

"You follow this up by saying 'The Association, unfortunately, goes much further than this, and shows a narrowness of outlook which sadly diminishes its claim to serious consideration,' and you add, 'Nothing could be more unfortunate than its opposition to the State control of Secondary Schools and the general provision of higher education at the public expense.'

"In this matter of education we stand absolutely by John Stuart Mill. Let me quote his words from the essay 'On Liberty': 'That the whole or any large part of the education of the people should be in State hands, I go as far as anyone in deprecating. All that has been said of the importance of individuality of character and diversity in opinions and modes of conduct involves, as of the same unspeakable importance, diversity of education. A general State education is a mere contrivance for moulding people to be exactly like one another; in proportion as it is efficient and successful, it establishes a despotism over the mind, leading by natural tendency to one over the body. An education established and controlled by the State should only exist, if it exists at all, as one among many competing experiments, carried on for the purpose of example and stimulus, to keep the others up to a certain standard of excellence.'

"You say we go much further than Mill, but I venture to think you cannot quote a word from Mill in opposition to any resolution which has been adopted by the Association. In one sense we have gone further because new evils have arisen. Mill said nothing about our municipalities spending the rates on the provision of billiard rooms. This was so for the simple reason that it had not entered his mind that such a thing could be proposed. Now it is done, and therefore it has become the duty of the Association

to go further than Mill and make its protest against such expenditure of public funds.

"Our protest has brought to light the fact that in addition to billiards being provided for the public, they are also provided for the municipal councillors in the sacred precincts of the town hall of a Metropolitan borough. In the face of such a state of things it is not strange that there should be a 'dread of entrusting our municipal bodies with money.'

"None of us begrudge the spending of public money on public purposes. On the other hand, we lament that public purposes are starved because of the illegitimate expenditure of our means on purposes which are outside the proper functions of government. It is the object of the British Constitution Association to promote efficiency in national and municipal government in all matters properly coming within the sphere of corporate control, and to oppose wasting of means on the vain effort to produce a people without the essentials of vigorous life—personal liberty and personal responsibility."

With the above letter was published an article, in which the *Oxford Chronicle* says :—"In the matter of secondary education there has been a complete revolution of circumstances since Mill wrote his essay 'On Liberty.' The need for higher education has become infinitely more general and urgent than it was 50 years ago; and private enterprise has absolutely failed to

meet the demand. That is the justification of that State intervention which the Constitution deplores. When Mill was in Parliament he voted consistently with the Radical party. We believe that, moving with the times, he would have voted with them to-day."

There seems to be agreement as to what John Stuart Mill taught. There it will be best to leave the matter, though the friends of liberty, if they entered upon the field of speculation as to "what might have been," would urge that had Mill been spared to us he would have been one of the last to "move with the times" in the temporary craze for a State in which the individual is to be sacrificed for the supposed good of the many and the weak "protected" into greater weakness.

MAN *versus* STATE*

By Mr. Hugh Elliot,

Member of Committee of the British Constitution Association.

Throughout the past evolution of societies now existing on the earth, one factor stands out as of paramount importance. That factor is the desire of each individual in the community to benefit himself to the best of his powers. Society has progressed, not through its own conscious desire to progress, not through the desire of the individuals that it shall progress; but its progression has been wholly consequent on that of the individuals contained in it, arising from the desire in each one for an amelioration of his own personal condition. The evolution of societies, that is to say, has been incidental; it has never been anyone's direct aim; but it has arisen as an unforeseen consequence of the efforts of individuals for their own advancement.

To see the truth of this statement, we have

*An Epitome of a B.C.A. lecture on the Social Philosophy of Herbert Spencer, delivered at the Whitehall Rooms on May 16th, 1907.

only to look at the complex nature of a modern society such as that we live in, and ask ourselves who has arranged it and organised it, who is responsible for its varied parts working harmoniously together? The question has only to be asked, for the absurdity of the assumption to be seen. For if production were to be regulated as to its quality and amount by State-appointed officials; if distribution were to be effected solely in accordance with the preconceived views of government agents; does anyone suppose that this organised and considered system would equal in efficiency our present unorganised system? Surely it is obvious that, even though the officials were far more intelligent than officials ordinarily are, and even though they had a far greater knowledge than officials ordinarily have, yet the community could not be made to work with the perfect harmony that it now does. The best chance of such regulation being successful would be for the officials to study the laws of supply and demand; and to behave in such a way as to make transactions as far as possible identical with what they would have been in the absence of any regulation whatever. But, obvious as are the disastrous consequences which would ensue if the State in its wisdom were to supersede Nature in the organisation of society, the evil is more insidious and its effects less easily perceived, when the supersession takes place very gradually, each institution being absorbed by

slow degrees into the ever-swelling body of the great State-octopus. I propose to examine the effects of this absorption in one or two particular cases; and to begin with I shall touch upon the results of State education. Here we see in the first place that one cast-iron system is applied throughout the country. The education provided is the same in manufacturing districts, in agricultural districts, and in seafaring districts. Now as Herbert Spencer has so conclusively shown, all progress depends upon diversity of character; and anything which tends to destroy this diversity is to that extent detrimental to progress and stereotypes the state of society into the form happening to exist at the moment. The primary result is a nation of mediocrities. Where many diverse systems of education are permitted to grow up, in correspondence with the needs of the people, the best systems will soon become apparent and will survive and prosper at the expense of the worst. They will also change according to the changing demands of different times. Another serious charge has to be brought against the efficiency of State education. The State assumes that education means nothing more than intellectual cultivation. Surely success depends far more on the character of the individual than upon the amount of knowledge which has been crammed into him. Over and over again we see the man who has studied much surpassed and left behind by the

man who has studied little, but who has acquired the habits of perseverance, activity, and above all thinking out things for himself. One very conspicuous instance of this was furnished to us during the Boer war; when a general, whose books were considered the very last word in military science, was a total failure when it came to practice. Of the obverse truth Herbert Spencer is an example. Renowned throughout the world for his encyclopædic knowledge and colossal intellectual powers, he tells us how as a boy he was far more backward than ordinary boys, and that it was out of the question for him to go to an university, owing to his inability to pass the elementary entrance examinations. Yet it is this sort of knowledge, and this alone that the State calls education. It taxes the efficient man who wishes to educate his children in a superior manner, so that he cannot afford to do so; and with the money so raised it "educates" the unpromising children of an inefficient man, who are likely to derive much less profit from it.

Another sphere into which the State is extending its activities, is in the taking over of various trading enterprises from private companies. The Central Government has a monopoly of the Post Office, Telegraphs, &c., which it mismanages in the supposed interests of the public; while local governing bodies all through the country are embarking upon undertakings *such as* electric lighting, tramways and any-

thing else the successful management of which is supposed to be of high public importance. The assumption underlying expenditure such as this, is that the governing body is a more infallible index of the need of the public for a certain commodity than is the demand of the public itself for that commodity. Under ordinary circumstances capital is invested where the interest earned by it is the highest possible; that is to say, where the demand of the public for it is the most urgent. When some visionary local body thinks that some scheme ought to be carried out for the good of the public—as in the establishment of steamboats on the river by the London County Council—the capital used in the undertaking does not suddenly come into existence out of thin air; but is withdrawn from the various other undertakings in which it would otherwise have been invested. To that extent trade is injured, and a public demand left unsatisfied. It is therefore no palliation of the proceedings to say that the municipal enterprise pays. The question is not whether it pays, but whether it pays better than that same capital would have paid if it had been invested according to the ordinary laws of supply and demand. It is possible that here and there an instance may be pointed out where municipal enterprise *has* been successful even in this rigorous sense; but none can deny that as a rule it is not so, and that hence the net result of municipal trading is to deprive the

public of what they want much in order to present to them what they want little.

This objection applies to all business projects carried on by governing bodies. All arguments in their favour rest on the false assumption that a government knows better what the people want than the people do themselves. By giving to the lowest section of the population an expensive system of education, which they cannot greatly profit by, the country at large is deprived of a vast amount of capital and labour by which it would be otherwise working for its own improvement.

There is another insuperable objection to municipal trading, and that is the set-back which it gives to private enterprise. This ulterior effect is little considered by that numerous section of the population whose political vision does not extend beyond the end of their noses; but for those who recognise that the fate of the nation in the future depends upon its enterprise in trade, the prospect of unlimited municipal trading is indeed terrifying.

Among the various other contrivances for increasing the number of the inefficients and diminishing the number of the efficients, are old age pensions, lax administration of the poor law, assistance to the unemployed. These all originate purely out of *sentiment*. It is not possible to produce sound arguments in their defence; and in default of reason, it is to sentiment that appeal is made. The inequality of

wealth now existing must often cause deep pain to sympathetic minds, but if we give way to sentiment we must beware of the danger of laying up far greater evils for future generations. There is no exception to the rule that where sentiment and emotion come in, science goes out; and as the aim of social science is to secure the highest welfare of society, an enlightened philanthropy will see to it that no sentiment interferes with our study of social diseases and their remedies.

Liberty of the individual is the leading principle of Spencer's social philosophy. It is combated nowadays mainly by those who advocate equality. Liberty and equality are mutually exclusive and cannot live together. The reason is very clear. Mankind are born unequal; unequal in physical strength, in intellectual strength, and in moral strength. If we disregard the facts of nature, and say "All men *shall* be equal," we can only attain the end by a profound subversion of the methods of Nature. The strongest and best must be kept down, and the weakest and worst must be helped up, and both must resign their liberty in the process.

Let us beware then of those so-called "practical politicians" who evince their practicalness in a total disregard for principles. They are in reality the most unpractical of men; they are schemers and visionaries, who think they know better than Nature, the path along which Society is to evolve; and who attempt to foist upon

the country by means of legislation their crude and uncritical ideas. If the country allows itself to be governed by visionaries such as these; if amid the multitude of minor reforms which are aimed at, the great principle of social liberty is forgotten; the revenge of Nature will be swift and sure. Deprived of a freedom which it did not merit, abject slaves to the will of an all-powerful government, the country will rush upon a ruinous end, as terrible and certain as was the end of the Roman Empire.

THE CONSTITUTION CONFERENCE, OXFORD, 1907.

A Brief Memoir by the First Honorary Secretary of the B. C. A.

A Letter to the Editor of the "Oxford Chronicle."

Sir,—It is with more than orthodox phrase that the members of the British Constitution Association can congratulate themselves on their first annual conference, held seven months after the issue of the first annual report of the Association. All the conditions conspired to render the occasion an agreeable one. Who would not go to Oxford, even when deprived of her summer garb, and who would not make double effort to assemble when almost the first summer days of the year promised to bless the proceedings? And the social side, always so pleasant a complement to any conference teaches a lesson to those who think that all social intercourse must mean Socialism. Here were individuals delighting in co-operation, pleased with this invaluable opportunity of seeing more of one another, even while they were bent on ad-

vocating the preservation of the individual position. It is good to be able to drop such distinctions as council or committee for a time, and to meet as a body; for a like reciprocity can hardly be expected from the more constrained meetings, where the work must always be more confined to the platform. Here the pleasure of the conference extended to the meeting in the streets before and after the different sessions, the first assemblage in the morning, before setting out for the day's work, finding us all fresh with the one topic concerning us. It is something, indeed, to be in such a city as Oxford with a definite purpose like that—it enhances, does not diminish, the charm of the place, and brings home to us the fact that it *is* a city of ideals even though it be "a home of lost causes, and forsaken beliefs, and unpopular names, and impossible loyalties!" We did not need to imagine *our* cause to fail there, and we could maintain that there is still a belief in certain cherished traditions, and that there are principles to profess which imposes no impossible loyalty; and, too, that the one unpopular name must be the one we are pledged to gainsay. Matthew Arnold, despite those utterances, would not allow himself to be discouraged by "apparitions of a day," and our conference can only have strengthened the conviction that it is among such apparitions that we must put the unpopular name, and that common-sense will prevail.

Pity the nation whose constitution is a lost cause! Hereafter men could well wonder if we ever allowed our inherited rights to be extinguished, and marvel at the ignorance of a people that could acquiesce.

The Association can never regret that it came to Oxford for its first conference, and it must be grateful to the Vice-Chancellor for the academic touch—without which Oxford would not be Oxford—given to the opening reception at Hertford College. And the college provided a great change from the ordinary lecture or committee-room known to the everyday work of the Association which none could do other than appreciate. In that spacious, airy hall there was a note of informality in no way hindering the earnestness of the work; the ample windows giving view on to the flank of the Bodleian a few feet away (emphasizing that proximity resulting from the narrow planning of the streets so pleasant a characteristic of the city, and whereby the old buildings become so intimate with one another); and within, the portraits, none more appropriate than that of Thomas Hobbes, as the Vice-Chancellor pointed out. All that, with the angle-glimpse of the Radcliffe dome, and Brasenose, Pater's College, beyond, must be acknowledged by all who would pay the full debt to Oxford.

Not the smallest value of the conference must be laid to the change of scene, always beneficial, and still more beneficial when it brings

new faces. And there is nothing more invigorating to a cause than to see new faces—men and women bringing a genial and optimistic wave of enthusiasm to inspirit the proceedings and encourage us to believe that the work of the Association is not work done in vain.

Yours faithfully, Max Judge.

July 23, 1907.

The First Annual Conference of the B.C.A. was held at Oxford on July 11, 12, and 13, 1907. The members were officially welcomed in the Hall of Hertford College by the Vice-Chancellor of the University, and by the Deputy-Mayor on behalf of the City Authorities. At the reception interesting addresses were delivered by the Vice-Chancellor and by Lord Hugh Cecil, then President of the Association. The proceedings of the Conference were admirably reported in the Press throughout the country.

The Sessional Meetings were held in the Hall of Hertford College, when papers were read as follows:—

"Old Age Pensions," by Sir Edward Brabrook, C.B.; and "The Problem of Unemployment," by Rev. P. S. G. Propert, M.A., Chairman of the Fulham Board of Guardians, Sir William Chance, Bt., in the chair.

"Co-Partnership in Housing," by Mr. Henry Vivian, M.P.; and "Small Holdings," by Mr. R. A. Yerburgh, the Hon. Percy Wyndham in the chair.

"The State and Secondary Education," by Dr. F. Arthur Sibly; and "The Part of the Parent in the State," by Miss Charlotte M. Mason, Mr. Mark H. Judge in the chair.

"The Practical Work before the Association," by Mr. St. Loe Strachey; and an address by Professor A. V. Dicey on the Referendum, Mr. C. F. Ryder in the chair.

THE POLITICAL DANGER OF THE DAY.

A letter to the Press.

TO THE EDITOR,

SIR,—The growth of political Socialism renders an apology unnecessary for troubling you on a matter which cannot be brought too prominently or too frequently before the public.

The essential condition for the progress of a community is that the incentive to efficiency on the part of its individuals shall be of the strongest possible kind. This required incentive can only be supplied by a strict application of the principle that the earnings of each individual shall be securely preserved to him. The development of our system of justice has been governed by this principle, and its chief aim has been to prevent individuals from plundering one another, and to maintain intact for each whatever he has earned. But it is forgotten that the evil to the community is as great

whether the plunderer be merely an individual member of society or society itself. In either case the citizen is deprived of the fruits of his labours, and the result to him is the same. Year by year more legislation is proposed of which the effect is to draw upon the earnings of the efficient for the benefit of the inefficient. Year by year Parliament makes life harder for those whose labour benefits the State, and easier for those who are a drag upon it.

In the supposed interests of the "majority," now one now another section is victimised, and the "liberty of the individual" through constant infringement becomes little more than a phrase. The basis upon which our civilisation rests—the central fact which has guided its evolution from the condition of a mere savage horde to that of the greatest empire in the world—is being sapped, and unless this is stayed we shall be led to the enervation which characterised the latter days of the Roman Empire, and which has heralded the decay of most of the great civilisations of the past.

The British Constitution Association has set itself the task of awakening the public conscience to this growing national peril, which is

in danger of being overlooked in the clash of party politics. It appeals to members of all political parties who wish to uphold individual liberty as above defined, to join in this work. Anyone willing to help can do so by becoming a member or by contributing to its funds.

The Secretary will send full particulars of the Association, including the programme of a series of lectures to be delivered during the Autumn, to anyone who may wish to know more about its work and methods.

I am,

Your obedient servant,

Balfour of Burleigh,

President.

The British Constitution Association,
23, Charing Cross, London,
October 2nd, 1907.

THE CONSTITUTION CONGRESS, LONDON, 1908.

THE Constitution Congress of 1908 will take the place of the Second Annual Conference of the British Constitution Association, and will be held in the Congress Hall of the Franco-British Exhibition on August 6, 7 and 8.

The object of the Congress is to consider the Political Constitutions of the French Republic, the United Kingdom, and the United States, with special reference to the safeguards they provide for maintaining personal liberty and personal responsibility. It is hoped that the discussions will throw considerable light on the Constitutions of the French and English speaking peoples. The object is strictly educational, and no resolutions on any of the Constitutions will be included in the Agenda of the Congress.

Lord Courtney of Penwith, Mr. Thomas Burt, M.P., and Sir William Chance, Bt., will be Presidents of the Congress, and among the opening speakers will be Monsieur Yves Guyot,

late Minister of Public Works in the Government of the French Republic; Professor A. V. Dicey, D.C.L., LL.D., K.C., Vinerian Professor of English Law, Oxford; Mr. Thomas Gibson Bowles, (M.P. for King's Lynn, 1892-1906); Professor W. M. Flinders Petrie, D.C.L., LL.D., F.R.S.; and Mr. Robert W. Chapin.

The arrangements for the Congress will include a Reception on the Thursday evening, Morning and afternoon Sessions on Friday, a morning session on Saturday and visits in the afternoon.

Congress Tickets, 10s. Members and Associates of the British Constitution Association Five Shillings. These Tickets will admit to all gatherings of the Congress on August 6, 7, and 8, and to the Exhibition on August 7 and 8.

Applications for Tickets should be made to one of the Honorary Secretaries of the Congress, viz.,

Monsieur Yves Guyot,
95, Rue de Seine, Paris.

Mr. Mark H. Judge,
7, Pall Mall, London.

THE BRITISH CONSTITUTION ASSOCIATION.

THE British Constitution Association was instituted in 1905 to uphold the fundamental principles of the British Constitution—personal liberty and personal responsibility—and to limit the functions of governing bodies accordingly.

The strength of a nation depending on the quality of its people, and the highest aim of human life being the elevation of character, the Association holds that all legislation which decreases personal responsibility or discourages personal initiative tends to weakness. Throughout the nation all should be encouraged to do something themselves, either personally or by voluntary co-operation—to do that something better than it has before been done— and thus make their individual contributions to the fund of general good.

The spread of Collectivist ideas on the contrary threatens to destroy the moral fibre of the British people by encouraging all classes to rely for their well-being upon Parliament or Municipalities rather than upon their own efforts. No legislation will make a people religious, or moral, or temperate, or industrious, and the Association has set itself to the work of bring-

ing home to the public conscience the truth that the source of well-being is individual effort—that the unit of social life is the family rather than the community.

The growth of municipal powers, accompanied by the continual creation of official positions, tends more and more to the development of a bureaucracy in every department of life. This is altogether foreign to the genius and temperament of the British people. Bureaucracy under a limited monarchy may be quite as destructive of personal liberty as bureaucracy under an absolute monarchy, and the Association is convinced that the only way to combat this evil is to limit the functions of governing bodies, until with the advance of civilisation they reach the irreducible minimum.

The primary functions of the State are to protect the country from invasion, and to secure the administration of justice, but to these so many have been added that the result has been confusion of the public mind as to the true functions of government. This has been the cause of undue interference with personal liberty and private enterprise, and the greatest vigilance is necessary in order to prevent the formation of a general opinion that there is no limit to the functions which Parliament and Municipalities may assume.

The fundamental principles of the British Constitution, as embodied in Magna Carta, *Habeas* Corpus, and the Bill of Rights, are the

bulwark of our liberties. They were won by struggles against State oppression, and are essential whether the controlling power in the State be democratic or autocratic. Our political institutions will continue to be modified by the natural forces of growth and decay, but the combination of institutions which is a distinguishing feature of the British Constitution is necessary in order to maintain that balance of political forces by which liberty is secured. As the judicial system regulates the relation of individuals, so the British Constitution regulates the relations of political forces. If loyally respected, the traditional British Constitution provides a check to the tyranny of any one element, including that of a passing majority, as effectually as do the written Constitutions of other countries, by safeguarding personal liberty and maintaining the obligation of contract. Indeed, a traditional Constitution has many advantages over a written one, but if its elasticity be abused then it may become necessary to provide other safeguards.

Whilst, then, it seeks to secure liberty, and believes that the path of progress lies in the direction of the gradual emancipation of the individual from the interference of the State, the Association is as much opposed to Anarchy as to Collectivism. The function of the State being to maintain freedom of the individual, limited only by like freedom of other individuals, the Association agrees that force must rest in

the hands of the government, but to be used strictly in the service of liberty, not as a means for subjecting a minority to the coercion of the majority.

Parliament and municipal bodies are in effect nothing more than communities appointed to represent the population, and in order that adequate attention may be given to affairs which are properly the concern of the community as a whole, it is imperative that they should not occupy themselves with matters which the people can perform satisfactorily in their individual capacities.

It should always be remembered that neither Parliament nor Municipalities can have anything to give to one section of the people which is not taken from another. This fact is of the utmost importance to workers, for if the principle of personal liberty and responsibility be disregarded then the workers will not only lose their liberty, but they will at the same time have to pay the cost of the mess of pottage which is offered as a bribe for the sacrifices of their independence—which mess of pottage the workers will have to share with the non-workers.

If governing bodies refrain from undertaking matters which come within the sphere of private enterprise, not only can the work be more efficiently and economically done, but they will have more time and energy to devote to their proper functions. One most important result of such a policy would be to attract into muni-

cipal work men who are not able, or who are not willing, as honorary public servants to devote their time to the management of large trading concerns, or to shift their responsibilities on to the shoulders of paid officials. The undue extension of local government activity robs the public of the services of many of the most capable men who might otherwise be ready to take part in municipal affairs.

The strength of the cause of personal liberty is too seldom realised even by its friends. The great bulk of the community are not politicians, and only wish to be let alone; but our liberties are encroached upon piecemeal, and sometimes by proceedings which are kept from the public view until the objectionable encroachment has been effected. It is the work of the Association to bring the light of public opinion to bear upon all measures which attempt to interfere unnecessarily with the liberty and responsibility of the individual citizen.

The Association provides a free platform for the discussion of public questions affecting personal liberty and responsibility, but in order that it may be a real power in resisting political Socialism it limits its active interference in the politics of our time to such action as commands the cordial support of the Members and Associates. Before taking action in any direction the Council and Committee are careful to ascertain what may not inaptly be called the greatest common measure of opinion in the Associa-

tion. Members and Associates who hold opinions outside this common measure will best help forward the cause of personal liberty and responsibility by co-operating with the Association in all those measures in which there is agreement, reserving for another platform the advocacy of views not in accord with the general opinion of the Association.

The question of personal liberty is one which appeals to a large number of both Liberals and Conservatives, and whenever any party proposes legislation conducive to the protection or promotion of true liberty, and calculated to place on each individual citizen that personal responsibility which best educes national character, the Association will support such proposals with all the means in its power. Similarly it will oppose proposals calculated to produce contrary effects. The objects of the Association are thus to hold up a national ideal and to advocate those principles which have in the past made for the true greatness of the British people.

The work to be done is enormous if opinion in favour of the objects of the Association is to be organised into an effective force. The Association appeals for co-operation to earnest men and women of all parties. There is no restriction upon the field of effort, and it is believed that the firm establishment of the Association will help to promote the political and social welfare of our country.

To the Reader.

IT is hoped that a knowledge of its work will induce you to join the British Constitution Association. You might not be able to attend many of the meetings, but, as a member, you would be fully informed of the doings of the Association through the pages of "Constitution Papers," which is sent post free to all members monthly.

You would at the same time have the satisfaction of doing something to resist political Socialism, thus helping to maintain the fundamental principles of the British Constitution.

You would receive transferable tickets for the B. C. A. lectures, and, at half-price, a ticket for the meetings of the Constitution Congress to be held in connection with the Franco-British Exhibition.

It is to be hoped that the B. C. A. will do for politics what the British Association has done for science. A greatly increased number of members is necessary to secure this result, and the Committee therefore trust that you will help to this end. The annual subscription is ten shillings.

A meeting for the Election of members is held on the first and third Friday of each month.

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Constitution Papers may be had of Booksellers and Newsagents and of the B.C.A., 23, Charing Cross, London, S.W.

Communications for *Constitution Papers* should be addressed to the Chairman of the Publication Sub-Committee of the B.C.A., 23, Charing Cross.

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